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ON TRYING PROVIDENCES.

[Continued from page 465.]

Has not good come out of *evil*? Did not Jacob obtain the blessing through deceit and falsehood of the basest kind?—Was not the elevation of Joseph, and the consequent preservation of Israel through the long famine, occasioned by the unnatural hatred of his brethren? Was not the persecution that arose about Stephen, the means of greatly spreading the gospel? for they went every where and preached the word. Was not the *crucifying of Christ* with wicked hands, productive of the greatest good possible? Even the very wrath of man is made to praise God. Yea, there is nothing so wicked or vile on earth or in hell, that it shall not be made to subserve the greatest good. I would not be understood as placing *any* of the institutions to which I have reference, on a level with any of these doings; but only to show that no possible amount of good, can prove the motives or means antecedent, to be right in the sight of God.

Perhaps to some the words of our Saviour may appear to favour the contrary—"By their fruits ye shall know them." Upon which I would remark, that that saying is intended only as a criterion of the characters of men pretending to be servants of Christ, while in reality they are wolves in sheep's clothing. Their doctrine and their practice are their *fruits*; and if these did not answer to the doctrine and practice taught in the word, the church was warranted to conclude against them; and there is no other way left to ascertain the real characters of men. We cannot look into the heart; but for judging of the nature of public institutions, we have another rule. If then this passage has any bearing on the point in hand, it is rather to establish my position; since, according to

it, even the real characters of men, which are much more remote from our view, are to be compared with the written word, through the medium of their actions. Were men as careful to separate from their motives and actions all good but that which is their own proper fruits, as they are to separate from them all *evil* which cannot be justly charged upon them, the amount of the *good* would be found very small, compared with what it is generally esteemed; and probably much conduct which is now applauded to the heavens for its *goodness*, would be found wanting. Men are not willing to be accountable for the evil which they did not foresee nor intend; and, by parity of reasoning, they are just as little entitled to have the *good* set to their account which they did not foresee or intend. But suppose they both foresee and intend evil; yet if the *law* does not criminate their actions, they will not admit it to be charged to them. On the other hand, with what justice can they claim the good which they foresaw and intended, while the law does not authorize them to act, nor sanction the means which they use. If the *intending* of *good*, with the foresight that it would come to pass, were enough to prove actions right, it would be difficult to convict the poor Catholic of any wrong in his pious frauds. But there is no need for reasoning here: the apostle has already determined the matter. "—And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some say that we affirm,) Let us do evil that good may come, whose damnation is just." Rom. iii. 8.—The Bible gives clear and full directions for doing good, which it so frequently enjoins and strongly enforces; and if we, in our zeal, follow them not, how much good soever may ensue, it will not, it cannot, be so reckoned to us; for there is no species of good doing required of any for which there is no directions in the word: for "it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, THOROUGHLY FURNISHED FOR EVERY GOOD WORK." But more particularly, nothing can be accounted *doing good* to us, unless what is done from a spiritual, supernatural principle, created by the Holy Ghost in the day of regeneration: "for the fruit of the Spirit is in *all goodness*." Eph. v. 9. But no principle of action in us is to be attributed to the renewing power of the Holy Ghost, but such only as in all its actings has an obediential respect to a divine command, either expressed or evidently implied in the word. For in many places the term *obedience* is used to comprehend the whole course of christian activity, from the moment of regeneration till the believer commits his departing spirit into the hand of his God. I shall mention only one, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanc-

tification of the Spirit unto obedience," &c. 1 Pet. i. 2. Therefore, unless our good doing be *obedience*, and flow from love to some special and particular command of God, whatever it may in its effects be to others, it will be accounted nought to us.

"For men," says Dr. Owen, "to pretend unto I know not what freedom, light and readiness, unto all holiness, from a principle within, without respect to the commands of God without, as given in his word, is to make themselves their own God, and despise obedience to him who is God over all and blessed for ever; then are we the servants of God, then are we the disciples of Christ, when we do what is commanded us, and because it is commanded us. And what we are not influenced unto by the authority of God in his commands, we are not principled for by the Spirit of God, administered in the promises. Whatsoever good any man doth in any kind, if the reason why he doth it be not God's command, it belongs neither to holiness nor obedience." *On the Spirit*, vol. 2. p. 393.

Again; there is nothing that will be acknowledged as obedience, which does not proceed from faith in Jesus Christ; or in other words, which is not the practical effect of the doctrines of Christ, which are all according to godliness. Works, without faith, will be of as little avail to us and as little worth in themselves, as faith without works. For, "without faith it is impossible to please him." "*Whatsoever* is not of faith is sin." I have been thus particular for the sake of those who approve and support the institutions to which I refer, solely because of the *good* that arises out of them, or is occasioned by them, and who are perfectly aware that if this will not bear them out, they cannot stand. I now consider that *good intended and good done* is fairly excluded from the ground upon which these institutions are to be approved, and being entitled to the support of Christians, or condemned and rejected; that must be the word of *God alone*. To this standard I would first bring Bible societies. The multitude may think this needless, since the very name would imply that they were, of all other societies in the world, the most strongly built on Bible authority. Yet if a few singular individuals should happen to think otherwise, none can refuse it to be most reasonable to try *Bible societies by the Bible*.

In order to be fairly understood, I say, 1st. The question is not, whether the Bible authorizes the distribution of Bibles to them who have them not? For this is fully conceded.—Scripture authority for this is full and complete, as may yet be shown in its proper place. Our desire and prayer is, that not a single copy fewer may be given away, but that the number may increase till every son and daughter of Adam can

read, in the language wherein they were born, the wonderful works of God.

2d. The question is NOT, whether individual Christians, able and inclined, have authority from the word to give away copies of the scriptures? For this is as fully conceded, as that they have authority to give bread to the hungry and clothing to the naked.

3d. The question is NOT, have persons not in fellowship with the church authority to do so? For they *have* authority to go not only this length, but a great deal farther. Whether God will accept their deeds depends, no doubt, on their motives and principles, which remain entirely between God and themselves. But so far as men have any warrant to judge, their conduct in this matter is dutiful and praiseworthy.

4th. Neither is the question, whether ought there to be any *public institutions*, whose business it should be to distribute the scriptures? For this we also affirm.

5th. But the question is, whether those institutions presently existing under the name of Bible societies, are authorized by the Bible? In answer to this question, if it can be shown, that to communicate the Bible is one of the principal duties which God has enjoined upon the *church*—that he hath enjoined it upon no other society, and that Bible societies, as they are presently constituted, are *not the church*, I shall feel warranted to conclude that they are not authorized by the Bible. To illustrate this, I shall inquire—

1st. *Whom* the truths of inspiration concerns? Here there will be no dispute; it will be readily granted by all that they concern mankind, of all ages and nations. This is evident from their predictions; as the following, “In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” “Behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.”—“And this gospel of the kingdom must first be preached among all nations.” They make known the apostacy of our first father, the depravity of nature, and the curse that ensued hereon, in which all are equally concerned. They reveal the only possible way of escape from the curse, which is faith in the atonement of Jesus, the Son of God. They reveal the preceptive will of God, which it concerns all his rational creatures to know and obey. They make known a particular overruling providence, which presides over the affairs of the universe, from the least to the greatest. They foretell all the great revolutions that shall take place in time; and they give an account of the last judgment, by which the state of every human being shall be eternally fixed. These things determine that the volume of inspiration cannot be the exclusive inter-

est of any particular generation or class of men, nor of the church herself.

2d. To *whom* has God committed the truths of inspiration? The first gospel promise was committed to our first parents after the fall, upon which they were constituted the church, and in that character was it given to them in trust. We find that he committed another portion of it to the same society through the ministry of Enoch, who was a preacher of righteousness and a prophet. Jude, verse 14. God also spake to Noah, another preacher of righteousness—to Abraham, the father of the faithful—and to Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promises. Again; when the seed of Abraham were brought forth from Egypt, and set up as a distinct people from all other nations, as if on purpose, all these antecedent revelations, which till then were traditionally handed down, were collected and committed in a public and solemn manner, together with the law, and the service and the glory, to them, as his church, by the hand of Moses. And now and henceforth it was committed to them in a written form. God also committed sundry portions of it to this same people by sundry prophets. The giving of the whole Old Testament is thus expressed: "God at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers, by the prophets." Heb. i. 1. The prophets were some of them priests, and some of them were kings; but they were all ministers of the church. By the term fathers, all the generations of Israel who lived before Christ, are intended; or, which is the same, those to whom the prophets were sent. In the same sense it is used, Rom. ix. 5. Thus it is plain that the Old Testament was designed, as it was given out, for the church; and it was not merely spoken to her as concerning the present occasion only. Thus far God spake to sundry others, to Laban, to Pharaoh king of Egypt, to Balak king of Moab, and to the Ninivites.—But none of these were made the depositaries either of these or any other sacred oracle. But when God at any time spake unto the fathers, he *committed* what he said to them as a sacred trust; and in this, as the apostle declares, was a chief part of their pre-eminence above all other people upon earth—"because unto them were *committed* the oracles of God." Rom. iii. 2. As to the New Testament, it is added, in the same verse—"hath spoken unto us in these last days by his Son." As to the meaning of this, there cannot be a doubt.—This messenger was the Great Apostle and High Priest of our profession, that is, under the gospel. And he was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel a minister of the circumcision, to confirm the truth of God unto the fathers. Those to whom he and his apostles spake, intended by the pronoun *us*, are in-

deed different individuals, but the same society or church.—The prophets delivered their oracles to the fathers—Christ and his apostles spake to their children, which make only one family, or as denominated in Eph. iv. 4. “one body.” Christ’s voice was to his sheep. The writers of the New Testament, who were his chosen servants, address their writings to brethren, beloved in the Lord, to saints, to the faithful in Christ, to sundry churches in Rome, Galatia, Ephesus, Corinth, &c. and to none else. Therefore it is manifest that God hath committed the whole of revelation to the church, and to none else.

The church, receiving from God, as a trust, these oracles, which are of universal concern, must thereby be bound to the following things:—

1st. To keep them *pure* and *entire*. This will be admitted on all sides. For the safe keeping of the law, as well as to be a witness against their corruptions, a copy was commanded to be put in the side of the ark, and it was brought forth again at a very seasonable time, when the knowledge of the law seemed to be almost lost. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 14. Ezra, the priest, was specially appointed to this duty. And he did every thing necessary to the purity and completeness of the Old Testament. The Jews bestowed great pains on the same thing. They numbered not only the words and sentences, but the letters, in the sacred text, that they might render corruption impossible. And by how much pains and labour, in sundry ages, in this matter, the church hath admitted this to be her duty, is generally known to the religious public. And God has raised up, as if on purpose for this work, sundry individuals with suitable qualifications, who have bestowed immense labour upon it. And such has hitherto been the vigilance of the church in this, that the enemies of truth have never succeeded in altering a single letter. But the obligation lies upon her still; nor has she less need, *even now*, to watch over the purity of the word. The many blunders and mistakes, through the carelessness of printers, which are frequently met with, though they seldom affect the sense, yet show the necessity of the church’s vigilance. But there are men in the world who would not scruple to corrupt it if they could. Let the Apocryphal controversy speak, and it will tell *what may be*.

2d. She is bound to *exemplify* these oracles. This too will be readily admitted; for she is as a city set on a hill, and ought to make the light of truth so to shine before men, that the world may see it and glorify her Father who is in heaven. She is the pillar on which the truth ought to be engraven.—The truth, quickened by the Holy Ghost, will be her life and

soul. When compared to a house, she ought to be built upon it. When to a tree, she ought to be rooted and grounded in it. And when she travels, she ought to walk in the truth. When she speaks, she ought to speak the truth in love. In her doctrines, nothing else ought to be heard. In her worship, nothing else ought to be seen or have place. And her government and discipline ought to be nothing but the administration of what is found in the lively oracles; so that to the whole extent of what she is as the church of the living God, she is but the truth, living, acting, and performing all the functions of a spiritual body. So far as she falls short of this, so far she answers not her character. In proportion as any christian society recedes from the truth in any of these respects, in the same proportion it loses the very nature of a church. In this *receding* from truth, lies the whole of apostasy and backsliding, which unchurches societies altogether, and converts them into synagogues of the devil.

3d. She is bound to *defend* the truths taught in these oracles. Although this is now generally regarded as an antiquated thing, not necessary at present, yet the general proposition will be admitted. All will agree that she is bound to defend their inspiration against the attacks of Deism. The orthodox will agree that she ought to defend the trinity of persons in the unity of essence, against Unitarians; and the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, against Socinians. There are still some points which every party is so concerned to maintain—if it were but *charity* and *liberalism*, against the chilling effects of *cold systematic orthodoxy*—that all will receive this proposition as containing an important duty of the church. And I add, that she is God's witness, and solemnly bound to contend and strive for the whole truth that hath come to her knowledge—to “stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.” Phil. i. 23.—to “contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.” Jude, verse 3. She is bound to imitate the perfect example of Him who is the faithful and true Witness, and who said, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but *one jot or tittle* of the law shall not pass till all be fulfilled.

4th. She is likewise bound to *explain* and *apply* them. This is one principal part of ministerial duty; nor will it be called in question by any partizan. But the *translation* of them belongs also to her. On the day of Pentecoste the apostles received the miraculous gift of tongues, for this end; and they spake to every one in the language wherein he was born, the wonderful works of God; and this gift was communicated to many of the primitive Christians. But though it has long since ceased; yet the obligation continues, to teach and ex-

plain these to every creature under heaven, as opportunity serves. But how shall this be done, without *first translating* them. The gospel is to be made known "by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandments of the everlasting God, to all nations." Rom. xvi. 25, 26. And this is possible only in one of two ways, since the gift of tongues ceased, either by teaching all nations to understand the language in which the prophets wrote, or to translate their scriptures into the languages in which all nations are born, which is the only way practicable. And to this work did several of the Reformers betake themselves. And to this, accordingly, the common judgment of the church is and has ever been, that before a man be sufficiently gifted to preach the gospel, he must be able to read and translate the original scriptures.

5th. She is bound to *communicate*, both to cotemporaries and descendants, all the truth that she has received in trust. This is inseparable from having in trust these oracles, which are of universal concernment. If Joseph receive all the corn of Egypt in the years of plenty, Joseph must sell it out again in the famine. And I know not by what sophistry this conclusion can be evaded. How otherwise can she be the pillar and ground of truth? To say that she is so only for herself, is absurd. The metaphor is borrowed from the ancient practice of kings, or those under them, erecting a pillar in some public place, and writing upon it their edicts and proclamations, that all concerned might read them. Part of a square column of this kind was recently found in Egypt, having the same thing on each side, but in a different language. In like manner, God has erected *his* pillar, for the purpose of holding out these oracles to the view of the four quarters of the world. How otherwise can the prediction be accomplished? "For out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Isa. ii. 3. If this should be limited to the first preachers of the gospel, proceeding from the literal Jerusalem, still it would imply that the primitive church at least was bound to give forth the law and the word of the Lord to the world. But such a limitation is altogether too narrow to admit of all the meaning of the passage. The Zion and Jerusalem here intended, are not the literal, but "the Lord's house established on the top of the mountains and exalted above the hills." verse 2. Moreover, "all nations flow into it."—And verse 4, "they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks"—"nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." This is the effect produced by the law and the word of the Lord *going forth*. These things will agree only to the christian church as established among the Gentiles. How

otherwise shall Christ's ministers execute the commission, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." This requires both the preaching of the gospel and distribution of the written word together. In proof of this it is sufficient to observe, that the same persons who were commissioned to preach, were empowered to commit to writing the New Testament; and therefore, beyond all dispute, they were bound to distribute the same. A Greek translation of the Old was already current. Here we have a practical comment on the words, or rather a measure of their accomplishment—"Out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem:" both must go together.—The one is not sufficient without the other. The preaching, without the written standard, is not. Suppose a missionary to go and preach to the heathen, without giving them the only rule of faith and practice; on what can the hearers rest their belief? Not on the testimony of God; for they have it not. By what can they try the doctrine and the spirits? Not by the law and the testimony; for they have them not. Christ and his apostles suppose the scriptures to be in the hands of their hearers, and appealed to them continually for the truth of their doctrine. How then can we preach the same gospel without making appeals to the word, as they did. And if even *they* who were infallibly guided by the Spirit, and wrought miracles to attest their authority; if even He who was *The Truth*, said to his audience, "Search the scriptures;" how much more ought the missionaries of modern days, who neither have inspiration nor are of one mind, to put the scriptures before their hearers, to which they may appeal? But before all this, it would be necessary that they show them their *authority* to preach and to exhort. Before any officers of state proceed to officiate, they show their authority; and this is at least equally necessary in the affairs of religion. God was at pains to certify in the most public manner his beloved Son to the church. The apostles, wherever they went, showed their authority by the working of miracles; and it is as necessary still that their disciples, when they go out to preach, show their authority. But this they can do, only by giving the Bible to those to whom they are sent, and referring to it. Therefore, it belongs, as a part of duty, to all who are sent forth to preach the gospel, to have the scriptures distributed.

The extraordinary appointment which Philip received from the angel of the Lord, to go and preach to the Ethiopian eunuch, and the eunuch's answer, may at once serve to show that God has not judged the scriptures alone to be sufficient. Philip said, understandest thou what thou readest? And he

said, "How can I, except some man should guide me?" To supply the defect, a gospel ministry has been appointed, to continue to the end of the world. That both ought to be sent out together, and that nothing less than presumption can separate them, appears manifest from the following text— "Now, unto him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, (according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the *scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.*" Rom. xvi. 25, 26.

That the church is under this obligation is evidently implied in several texts, and explicitly declared in others. I quote them without commenting. "All these things happened for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." 1 Cor. x. 11.— "Whatsoever things were written afore time, were written for our learning." Rom. xv. 4. "Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, (only,) but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you," &c. 1 Pet. i. 12. And in the words of Stephen, it is explicitly declared, "Who received the lively oracles to give unto us." Acts vii. 38. Yea, it is a positive command, which will continue in force to the end of the world—"The father to the children shall make known thy truth." Isa. xxxviii. 19. And still more express—"For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers that they should make them known to their children, that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children." Ps. lxxviii. 5, 6. The church has in all ages virtually acknowledged this obligation. The patriarchs painfully committed all the divine oracles they had received to those who succeeded them, until they were committed to writing by Moses. All the divine oracles received by the Jewish church, during the law, were carefully preserved, and transmitted to the christian church; and she has for ages been doing the same thing. I shall only add, that she, of all societies that *can* exist under heaven, is the best qualified to perform this duty. She has experimental knowledge of the infinite worth of these oracles; she is powerfully inclined, by a principle created within her by the Holy Ghost, "to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery;" nor is it possible that any other can be so interested in this as she is. The amount of all the biblical literature in the world is possessed by her; and the government which God has instituted in her,

from that exercised by the church session up to the general or ecomenical council, possesses all the facilities of co-operation which can be possessed by *any* organization. When, therefore, I reflect that these oracles of universal concernment have been committed to the church through her public ministers, and to none else; that it is enjoined on her to preserve, defend, exemplify and communicate them; that she has in all ages, and under all dispensations of grace, virtually acknowledged her obligation to these duties, and in a good measure performed them, and that she is incomparably the best qualified for them; it appears far more difficult to comprehend how any *can doubt*, than how they can believe, that the SAME HAND, which has RECEIVED these oracles FROM GOD, SHOULD GIVE them TO MAN.

[To be continued.]

THINGS INDIFFERENT.

In our number for February, p. 415, we published the first part of an article on *Occasional Hearing*, the conclusion of which will be found in the following pages. But before we proceed to give the conclusion, we think it advisable to insert the subjoined extracts from the writings of the Rev. James Ramsay, occasioned by the controversy respecting the propriety of minister's taking the cup into their hands before prayer and thanksgiving, in the administration of the Lord's supper. We extract from a sermon on Forbearance, preached before the Associate Presbytery of Glasgow, and a Letter to a Friend, both published in 1782. It is not supposed that these observations of Mr. Ramsay *contradict* any thing in the article from our correspondent *Xenos*; but they explain the *nature*, and define the *extent* of the argument there brought forward against the practice of occasional hearing. That is, these extracts show, that things indifferent may be urged upon us as matters of prudence or expediency, or for peace's sake; but can never be enforced as the requirements of a divine institution. We now quote from the sermon:—

“By a thing *indifferent*, we mean an action which is neither commanded nor forbidden; and therefore may either be done or not, without censure fixed upon our conduct by the word. Were not the prejudices or the passions of men engaged, it would be manifest, that it is not sufficient to determine any thing to be *not* indifferent, that we have always considered it as an object of importance; that custom and education have invariably presented it to us in this light; or that many great and wise men have spoke and wrote in favour of our opinion. Undoubtedly that is a thing indifferent, whatever it be, about which the word of God either in express terms, or by just and necessary consequence, leaves us to our liberty; whatever sentiments we or others have adopted, and been accustomed to entertain concerning it. It would be easy to point out a variety of such things, even relating to the worship of God;

but they shall at present be left to your own attentive reflection. Only, that things of this nature are objects of forbearance, the scripture is clear and express. The observation of certain rites of the ceremonial law, particularly in relation to meats and days, was for a season entirely indifferent in the christian church; for the apostle declares it was enough, that every man was fully persuaded in his own mind. If any had freedom to observe these rites, he might observe them without sin for the present: because though the law of commandments contained in ordinances was abrogated by the death of Christ, that consequence of his death was not sufficiently notified to the church. He, again, that disregarded them was under no obligation to the contrary, but hereby gave evidence that he was more enlightened about the new dispensation.—Thus forbearance was to be exercised:—"Let not him that eateth," says the apostle, "despise him that eateth not; and let not him who eateth not judge him that eateth; for God hath received him. Why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." Rom. xiv. 3. 9, 10. In like manner, the eating of things sacrificed to idols was, in itself, indifferent; for the same apostle having observed, that "an idol is nothing in the world," subjoins, "neither if we eat are we the better; neither if we eat not are we the worse." Hence he directs, "if any of them that believe not, bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go, whatsoever is set before you eat, asking no questions for conscience sake." 1 Cor. viii. 4. 8. ch. iv. 23. 27. This too he represents as a matter of forbearance; and the only rule he lays down is, that none should eat with offence: "But take heed, lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to them that are weak:" for many things are lawful, which are not expedient: those things that are lawful may not edify. And in things indifferent, the expediency and edification of brethren, supposing them weak in extreme, is to determine the observation or neglect of them.

The reason of such things being the object of forbearance, is both plain and forcible. Where Christ, our common Lord, has left us and our brethren at liberty, we have no right to bind them up. In so much as pretending it, we presumptuously desert our own sphere, invade the Redeemer's throne, and attempt to wreath a yoke of bondage upon the necks of the free subjects of his kingdom. In such cases, instead of yielding to our pretensions, they are obliged to defend the honour of their master and their own privileges against our daring blasphemous encroachments. "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free: and be not

entangled again by the yoke of bondage." But you said, for the sake of my edification they ought to submit. Do not mistake. What we say is, that it is your business to get over your weak prejudices, and to be in the diligent use of all proper means for that end. If you have not success, if the thing in question be really indifferent, and acknowledged to be such by your brethren; and if, at the same time, it be not pressed upon them *as necessary*, it appears to us, that they may and ought to yield for the sake of peace, and for the sake of your weak conscience. But, to abstract from other things, if it is pressed upon them *as necessary* from the command of Christ, it appears to us in the strongest light, that they ought not to yield: because you are adding to the law of Christ, and maintain your false opinions and prejudices to be the rule of faith and duty. In that case, by their submission, they consent to, and support your bold invasion of our Lord's sovereignty, cast off his authority and declare themselves the servants of men. The example of our apostle is fully to our purpose. When *circumcision* was let, as a matter of *indifference*, no man could be more condescending than he. To the weak he became as weak. He even circumcised Timothy, because of the Jews who were in those quarters; and that after the famous decision at Jerusalem about the obligation of the ceremonial law. Acts xvi. 3. But when it was pressed as *binding* by the authority of Christ, and *necessary* to salvation, in Galatia, in Antioch and other places, he would not give place by subjection, no, not for an hour; but every where warned the churches against such usurpations. "Behold I, Paul, say unto you, that if ye be circumcised Christ shall profit you nothing.—How turn you again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?" Gal. iv. 9. ch. v. 2."

The following quotation is from the Letter to a Friend:—

"In things in themselves *indifferent*, while they are not made *necessary*, and alledged to bind the conscience by the authority of Christ, the exercise of christian love is to be carried very far, on the head of edification and offence. "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak." Rom. xiv. 21. Let his offence be ever so unreasonable, the occasion of his stumbling ever so small, love to Christ, and regard to our brother as a member of Christ, oblige us, when convinced that he is sincere and conscientious, to forbear what aggrieves him. We may pity his weakness, but it is at our peril if we insult it. It is proper to endeavour to convince him of his mistake, and to disentangle his conscience; but

failing of success, there is no choice left. By the authority of the great Head, we are bound to go every length of self-denial for his good to edification. But the matter is set in quite another light, when things in themselves *indifferent*, are made *necessary*, especially in virtue of divine precept. Then no pretences of edification can be heard, but are to be treated with all the indignation that is consistent with the meekness of wisdom; because then *men* assert themselves to be our God. Appointing us another rule of faith and practice than what we can or dare receive as Christians, or even as the subjects of God's moral government, they claim the subjection of conscience to their presumptuous dictates. To yield in these circumstances, is an attempt to dethrone Christ, and a plain confession that we are the slaves of the worms of his footstool.

"All the things referred to in the above passages were in themselves indifferent. The observation of ceremonial rules about meats and days was so, for a season. The eating of things sacrificed to idols was so. Many of the primitive Christians stumbled at the neglect of the one, and at the participation of the other. Conscience being engaged, they not only had no freedom to do as others, but took offence at their liberty. Still, however, they did not impose their opinions and observances. In these circumstances, the apostle directs to indulgence. Had there been any imposition of indifferent things, he would certainly have assumed another tone, and laid an express interdict upon both parties; upon the one not to *persist* in those encroachments, and upon the other not to *submit* to them. Wherever matters were driven to this *crisis*, he doubtless addressed all the churches with the same firmness which he expressed to the Galatians—"how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye have desired again to be in bondage? Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not again entangled with the yoke of bondage" Gal. iv. 9, 10, 11. and v. 1.

"His example, we may be certain, was agreeable to his doctrine. It was a matter in itself indifferent to him, whether he used this kind of food or another, provided that both were salutary. When offence therefore was taken at any article, "to the Jews he became as a Jew, that he might gain the Jews; to them that were without the" ritual "law, as without law, that he might gain them. To the weak he became weak, that he might gain the weak:" Nay, he was "made all things to all men, if by any means he might gain some." He would not indulge his appetite and taste to any man's hurt. But persuaded as he was of the Lord, that there is nothing unclean

of itself, or unlawful to be used by Christians with thanksgiving; had the abstinence from certain articles or the use of them been pressed by divine authority, would he have yielded? Take his own answer, "All things are lawful for me; but I will not be brought under the power of any. For why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience? For, if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that, for which I give thanks?" 1 Cor. vi. 12. and x. 29, 30. When circumcision was left indifferent, or recommended on the head of expediency and edification, he readily consented to the operation upon Timothy. Acts xvi. 13. When it was urged as obligatory by divine command, and necessary to salvation, he contended against it with the utmost intrepidity and warmth. Gal. ii. 3, 4. and v. 2, 3. and vi. 12, 13. In this he did no more than follow our Lord's own example. It was a matter of indifference in itself, whether people washed their hands before meat or not; yet because washing was pressed by the Pharisees as necessary from their oral tradition, though much offence was taken at the neglect, neither our Lord nor his disciples practised it, nay he strongly condemned it. Mark vii. Luke xi. It is a matter of no consequence to me, whether I appear in public in a *black* suit, or a *blue*, or a *mixed*. Were a scrupulous Christian to take offence at any of these colours, I should certainly renounce it; but were he at once so weak and assuming, as to insist, that the suit that displeased him was prohibited by the authority of God, and that another more agreeable was enjoined on my conscience, I should certainly stand fast in my liberty, and be in danger of treating him with incivility."

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FOR THE RELIGIOUS MONITOR.
OCCASIONAL HEARING.

(*Concluded from p. 420.*)

In a former paper a few considerations were offered, on the supposition of its being, in itself, a matter of indifference,—its giving offence to fellow-professors,—the danger of it as an example to lead others astray and of unsettling the persons themselves in their profession. I might have adverted more particularly to the effects of it which are but too visible on those congregations in general where it is most practised; that in proportion as it prevails, so does a taste for all the new modes and fashionable improvements in the church. The refinements in the *art* of praise first attract the notice, and being *in themselves indifferent*, must be introduced in our own congregations, to the great disturbance of many godly persons; and hereon arises new ground of

offence, new sources of discord ; brotherly love is weakened, the edification of all is greatly impeded, and rapid strides are made in the common course of innovation ; for it is impossible to associate, and find pleasure in associating with those who are given to innovation, and not be infected with the same spirit ; especially as human inventions are always more pleasing to the human mind, than the simplicity of divine prescriptions. Again ; as this increases, so does an acquaintance with the spirit of our principles decay, all distinct views of divine truth become effaced, and extreme languor marks all their movements in defence or support of the cause. It is easy to see how those who are not careful to give constant attendance where our principles are taught ; but like the Athenians of old, only where they can see and hear some new thing, must be unacquainted with them, and of course uninterested in their support. That this is the case, every candid person, who has had opportunity of observing the growth of this practice, will allow. Does it not then show the exceeding impropriety of it, even though in itself indifferent ? Or rather, is it not a strong presumption that it cannot be classed among things indifferent at all ? Every doctrine of the gospel, is a doctrine according to godliness, leading to an increase of holiness and godly edifying, and so will every practice be that is founded on the same. But we have seen that it is not so with this practice. Therefore, we now come to show *wherein is the evil of it ;* or that it is in itself sinful.

1st. It is giving countenance to the teaching of error ; whereas the direction is, "Cease my son to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge." It is not only, cease to *believe*, but cease to *hear* it. How vain then is the pretence made by some, that in hearing, they can reject the errors and believe only what is true ; for even were it so, they disregard this injunction of the Holy Spirit. The generality think, if no error be preached in the particular discourses which they happen to hear, this cannot be charged on them. But herein there is a great oversight of what it is that gives the distinct existence to the different bodies of professing Christians, or what is the specific difference between the Secession and others. It is not Christianity, nor may it be Protestantism : there they hold in common, and common things do not make a difference ; but certain errors which they hold, and we cannot hold, or certain truths which they reject, and we feel ourselves bound to hold ; in these *errors*, therefore, and in nothing else are they considered as distinct bodies from us. No preacher in the pulpit, of Baptist, Methodist, General Assembly, Associate Reformed, or any other denomination, stands there merely as a Christian, or as a Protestant,

but more particularly as the maintainer and defender of these very errors, on account of which we stand apart from them. So that whether these be expressed in words in every discourse, or not, the very fact of the preacher's being there in that character, and the fact of that society being a distinct body ; and as such, their meeting for worship is at once a full and constant avowal of them. Many think that the mere circumstance of their going to hear a sermon, can be no such countenancing or approving of their errors ; but the others think very differently of it : even those who affect most to despise us for our fewness, insignificancy, &c. show themselves very sensible to the compliment, and also to the meaning of a contrary course. But though men should take no notice of it, that is the meaning of it before God.

2d. It is actually holding communion with the erroneous.— It is a great mistake to think that church fellowship is only in sealing ordinances. That is indeed the highest degree of it. But there is certainly a religious fellowship in all religious duties, wherever persons associate together ; and that fellowship must take its name from that of the association. When private persons so meet, it is private fellowship. And if there be no articles agreed on as the ground of that fellowship, every one is left at liberty to hold and express his own sentiments. They may differ in opinion, and yet the one party not be chargeable with countenancing the errors of the other. But when they meet as a church, or part of a church, it is church fellowship ; and the principles of that church are the previously settled ground of it. And let them be as erroneous as they may, the conduct of all who do so meet with them, is a professed agreement to the same. I am aware that very many will say they have no such views or intention. It may be so ; yet that is the true interpretation of their conduct ; and surely there is nothing plainer than that a man's conduct, his profession, and his heart's belief, ought all to be in unison : where that is not the case there is room for the charge of duplicity. To join in external acts with a professing body, whose very existence is a declaration to the world that they hold such (erroneous) principles, and whose every meeting is a renewal of that declaration, and whose whole aim and labour is to promote these principles, and then to say we do not believe their principles nor enter into their views, but desire the advancement of those that are opposite, is to act a part so inconsistent, that if any man would equal it in secular things, he would be considered unworthy of trust or confidence.— Multitudes, indeed, on going into places of worship intend only to be spectators, without taking any particular interest ; but that they cannot be : every man must be either for the truth,

of *against* it. "He that is not with me is against me," said Christ: there is no middle way; and if it be wrong to hear where truth is mingled with error, it is certainly worse to do so with such a motive: this is deliberately turning a deaf ear to all instruction. "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools."

3d. It is in direct opposition to our own testimony. It is opposed to the whole *spirit* of it, viz. a faithful witnessing for the truth and against prevailing error, is a witnessing not merely in words, but especially in life and conduct. What must I think of the man who tells me one thing, and does the opposite? But either he was not in earnest when he spoke, or his word is not to be believed. This witnessing is our duty; not at some particular times, in some circumstances or places only, but is coextensive in length and breadth with the whole life, diffusing itself through every part of it, and wherever truth and error appear in contest, or in whatever form, we are bound by a corresponding testimony to stand up in behalf of truth. Nor is this the duty of the church as a body only, but also of every individual member. The character of a witness he can at no time lay aside, (if he would be a faithful witness.) But certainly this is done in the act of joining with other societies. The apostle enjoins, "Hold fast that which is good." There is no limitation here; there is no person to whom this does not apply, no time, no circumstance, no truth, whether of doctrine or practice; and there is no degree of relaxing which it does not forbid. Had he enjoined us to act a negative part, as, not to contend against what is good, we might have had the appearance of compliance, as long as we did not actually oppose it. But here, if we are not active and vigorous, and that constantly in behalf of whatever is good, we are active against it. We have here to row against the stream, which requires constant exertion; and to slack the oars but one moment, is as surely to go backward, as though we should ply with the current. It is opposed also to the whole *matter* of our testimony. We there testify against the prevailing errors of all the presently existing sects, and witness for the opposite truths. When therefore we join with any of these, we are condemned out of our own mouths. But in particular it declares, (Part. 3. Art. 2. Sect. 9.) with the Confession of Faith, that "saints by profession are bound to maintain a holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God, and in performing such other services as tend to their mutual edification." Because to enter into communion with the visibly wicked, with the promoters of error, and with the lukewarm, who will not openly and faithfully appear in the

cause of Christ, or to enter into communion with those who are obstinate in apostacy from the truth received, would be no holy fellowship, and would tend to our mutual hurt. That the communion here spoken of, is not meant only of that in sealing ordinances, but extends also to all public religious fellowship, is evident from the distinct mention of "the worship of God" and "other services, &c." And in particular, that it includes *hearing* of any such, is proved by the application made of this passage by the Synod, in our Book of Discipline, (Part. 2. Art. 2. Sec. 12.) where, after quoting it, it is added—"And as in an act against occasional communion, passed in the year 1796 by the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, now the Associate Synod of North America, we have declared, that if we attend on the ministry of such as are involving themselves in the common defection, it is contrary to the profession we ourselves have made; for we thus take part with them, as a church, in the worship of God, while, in our profession, we expressly declare that we ought to maintain a separate communion, as a testimony against them: And as the Synod still adheres to these sentiments thus judicially declared, they do therefore judge the practice of attending on the administration of such as are known to be erroneous, or opposers of a testimony for truth, to be censurable, &c." These are the sentiments held forth in our standards on the subject; and for any one who has solemnly professed their acceptance of them and promised adherence to them, still to ask, *wherein is the evil of it?* is, "after vows to make enquiry," which "is a snare." The time for enquiry is before: and surely the due consideration of the solemnity of declaring before God and men, that such we believe to be truth, according to the scriptures, will induce every conscientious person then to make a scrupulous enquiry, and be fully satisfied on it before taking such a step. I shall here further only answer what is sometimes offered as an argument for the practice, viz: When the members of other churches visit our places of worship, we are then worshipping with them, and what more harm to do so in one house than in another, theirs more than ours? But this is rather a quibble than an argument: it is not the same either to them or to us. In so doing they do not contradict any testimony they have given to the contrary. It is certainly not the same fault for a person to come from a less to a more sound body, and to go from a more to a less sound one. As for our joining in fellowship with them, the terms of our fellowship are our declared principles; and their conduct in worshipping with us, would say they agreed to these; which we would rejoice to see universally the case in sincerity.

In conclusion—We may see, that such being the true character of this practice, no circumstance or modification can excuse it. It matters not whether it be done often, or only on particular occasions. I am surely no more at liberty to contradict my own solemn vows on a week day, than on a Sabbath; and I am bound as much to hold the Secession principles when my own pastor is absent, as when he is at home; and also to walk as consistently with my profession of them. There is an excuse sometimes offered, "I am not within reach of any of our own congregations." In this case the persons must either have removed from a pure dispensation, or it has been removed from them. If the first, let them say whether they had a clear call from God to such a step. If not, it was their sin, and can be no cover for farther sin. But even if they had, no local situation ought to affect their belief of divine truth. Again; if a pure ministry has been taken from them, this is a chastisement from God, calling to a very different course surely, from neglecting and deserting a testimony for his truth.

XENOS.

Miscellaneous.

FROM THE QUARTERLY REVIEW.

THE PRESENT STATE OF THE JEWS.

[Continued from page 472.]

Prospect of their Conversion.—Halle, in Prussian Saxony, the seat of a university, was also that of the Callenberg institution, the first formed with a view to convey the gospel to the Jews. It originated under very interesting circumstances, in 1728, and was supported by voluntary contributions, collected in Germany; but as it was, in the main, an offspring of the piety of the Protestant German clergy, it perished, as the parent plant withered away under the blasts of infidelity, and expired, for want of funds, about the time of the French revolution. Amongst its publications are, the *Journal and Travels in Europe, Asia, and Egypt*, of Schultze, its most devoted missionary, a man remarkable for his piety, humility, discretion, industry, and knowledge of languages, ancient and modern: they form a work of high interest in various points of view. This society circulated translations into Hebrew of portions of the New Testament, several copies of which have been found among Jews, both in Poland and Aleppo; an important testimony that their labours were not fruitless. Not long since a copy of the gospel of St. Luke, translated and published by this society in 1738, was found in the possession

of an unconverted Jew in Bombay, and he exchanged it for a Bible, refusing every other price. It is now in England. Its date, its travels, which no doubt have been performed in Jewish hands, and the price required and obtained for it, are sufficiently instructive.

The next attempt made by any body of men to communicate the knowledge of the gospel to the Hebrews was that of the "London Society for promoting Christianity among the Jews." It was formed in 1809, and its founders appear not to have known that the Callenberg Institution had existed. It has been for many years a religious society of the Church of England, exclusively. Its revenues arise from voluntary contributions, and were last year between fourteen and fifteen thousand pounds. It has translated the New Testament into Hebrew, and employs various missionaries abroad, particularly in Poland, where they enjoy especial protection from government. Other societies have been formed subsequently in Great Britain and Ireland, with the same object, either in connection with that Society, or acting independently of it; and the continent is beginning to follow this example.

The Berlin Society receives a strong countenance and support from his Prussian majesty and his government; one of his aids-de-camp general is its president, and many distinguished persons in the church, and in the service of the state, are members of its committee. It appears to labour successfully through its missionaries in Prussian Poland. Other societies are connected with it. A like society, at Dresden, has had distinguished patronage, and a society has been formed at Petersburg, with a view to afford protection to Jewish converts.

When we endeavour to form some estimate of the probable result of such institutions, we must bear in mind how almost entirely the minds of men, both Christians and Jews, were unprepared for any enterprizes of this nature only twenty years ago. Emperors and kings (and such *are* to be the nursing fathers of Israel) have already given proofs of an earnest interest in its weal, and in its adoption of the gospel; and large bodies of men among the Christians are associated in order to promote this. Sentiments of kindness towards the Israelites, unknown before, have arisen, and have been brought into action; and the evidence of such sentiments, is, above all things calculated to work favourably upon a people, who are as unexampled in the strength of their love for kindred and friends, as in their hatred of their enemies and strangers.

The difficulties, however, are great, and must not be disguised. The Jews resisted the preaching of Christ himself and of his inspired apostles: the traditions, which so materi-

ally aided in causing that resistance, have multiplied a hundred fold since then; and there arose subsequently amongst them a new and deadly repugnance to the gospel, as being the law of their own persecutors. At the commencement of our Lord's mission, the Jews attempted his life, because he signified to them the call of the Gentiles to the gospel; trodden under foot for ages, on account of their rejection of it, by those Gentiles who accepted it, they traced their calamities up to Christ with a blindness like that of their fathers, and heaped upon the name of the Son of God a horrible and vindictive hatred, of which the Talmud, in its text and commentary, the Mischna and Gemara, bears dreadful and multiplied evidence. The rabbis, their spiritual guides and rulers, have moreover most powerful worldly motives for endeavouring to check the progress of the gospel, which they do, by burning tracts and the New Testament, whenever they can get them into their hands, with unrelenting activity, and by harassing the Jews who are inclined to turn their attention to Christianity—*inter alia*, by curses and imprecations, of which they have long possessed a fearful store, and for adding to which they possess a facility which attests the effects of uninterrupted practice and Asiatic imagination. Their priestcraft, pre-eminence, power, and worldly wealth, are all at stake. The Jews, moreover, are scandalized, especially on the continent, by our profanation of our own Sabbath, and other prevalent impieties: they have no need to send spies to learn the weaknesses of the lords of the land, for they dwell among us, and in our tents. They are on the one hand, so bound together by worldly interests the most cogent, and by family and national affections, that any individual has an effort to make, in breaking the bonds of his religion, of which we, situated as we are, can form no just conception; while, on the other hand, they despise *us* as typified by the unclean animals, as strangers to God, and about to perish under His wrath; for, it is undeniable, that all Rabbins are confidently looking forward to the destruction of the European christian nations, and especially of those of the church of Rome, in the secondary accomplishment of the prophecies respecting Edom and Babylon, as about to take place about this very time. The chief residence of Jews among Christians has been in Roman Catholic states, and most especially in ancient Poland; and, consequently, their impressions, their opinions, and their feelings, respecting Christianity, are mainly formed on the manner in which they see it practised in those countries; and the burdens with which popery has overwhelmed the religion of the gospel, are especially calculated to offend the Israelite. Further, the denial, by many Christians, of their future and glorious re-establishment in Pales-

time, exasperates the Jews, and leads them to impeach our judgment, as that of partial, unjust and ignorant interpreters of the prophecies of the Old Testament regarding these matters. And lastly—a considerable difficulty in the cause of promoting Christianity among the Jews, is created by the excessive depravity and miserable poverty prevailing among the lower orders of that people; many of whom have been led to feign themselves proselytes, in the hope of worldly advantages, and thus brought much discredit on the cause, both among the Israelites and the Christians. But, as none of the converting societies, we apprehend, *now* give pecuniary aid to the neophytes, (under a rule of absolute necessity, though often most painful in its application,) this evil is little to be apprehended for the future.

But while it is right to state these difficulties and obstacles to the attempt to diffuse the gospel among the Jews, so as to prevent unreasonable expectations, the parents of disappointment, on the one hand; so, on the other, in order to obviate discouragement, it should be added, that there exists among them now a spirit of inquiry, and a disposition and desire to hear new things, which are decidedly favourable to that attempt. The fearful recent convulsions, which agitated the European nations, the ill-extinguished fires of commotion still smouldering, and the present revolt among one class of the Grand Seignor's subjects, have excited extraordinary attention in a people full of hope, and have brought their faculties into action on matters long little noticed by them. The interest beginning to be taken in themselves, has awakened a corresponding one on their part. The active state of the human mind of late years, often indeed a feverish one, the increase of knowledge, and their improved access to education, have stimulated and invigorated their intellects. It would appear, that in their discussions with missionaries, they display less learning than Schultze and his colleagues were encountered by, but they are now more sensible to appeals made to their hearts; that they cavil less, and feel more.

The missionaries in Poland, on visiting places for the first time, have frequently found in the hands of Jews, and conveyed to them by other Jews, New Testaments and tracts originally distributed by themselves; and in one case, a Jew was converted thus by a tract given to him by one of his brethren, who retained his Judaism. Mr. Wolff found at Ispahan and Cashan, Hebrew New Testaments which he had given away at Jerusalem and Aleppo, and had marked; and there were notes subsequently inserted, recommending them to the perusal of the Persian Jews; and there are accounts of New Testaments given to Jews at Ispahan, having been sent to

their brethren in the Balk, Bokhara, and Afghanistan. The Jews in one of their colleges, at Mosul, near the site of Nineveh, showed to Mr. Wolff a manuscript of the New Testament in Arabic, but written in Jewish characters: the translator was a rabbi, now dead, but whose son still lives there. Mr. Wolff found it to be a good translation. They refused to part with it. The rabbi had written in it a recommendation to peruse it, addressed to the members of colleges and to his descendants. Mr. Wolff found also, in the library of the Spanish Jews at Jerusalem, a Syriac translation of the New Testament written in Hebrew characters. This is the less surprising, as Schultze, in 1754, found the Eastern Jews less disputatious than the European, and especially the German, and they heard him willingly. He tells us, moreover, that they do not talk during worship, as those of Europe do.

With respect to conversion of the Jews, it appears that many have taken place of late years, and especially in Germany; and that although there have been some cases of deception and apostacy, and mainly in the earlier day of the attempt, many of the proselytes give every reason to believe in their sincerity, and to depend upon their firmness. One hundred Jews were baptized in Berlin alone, in 1825; and there is most satisfactory testimony that there is every reason to trust in the far greater part of those conversions as disinterested, and founded on a competent knowledge of the grounds of their new faith. Two young rabbis of Berdichef, in Russian Poland, just after a missionary had left their town in despair of success, abandoned every thing, and wandered above twelve hundred miles on foot to Berlin, by a circuitous road, in search of Christianity. They had a language and trades to learn, that they might earn their subsistence, and have conducted themselves ever since, that is, about six years, in the most exemplary manner. Unless they have perished under their sufferings, there are at this moment two lately baptized Jews in the prison of the arsenal at Constantinople, whose enraged brethren have bribed the Turks to inflict upon them a variety of privations, hardships, and chastisements, which an English clergyman, who saw them, describes to be such, that to have met death would have been more easy than to endure them: though their instruction in the truths of Christianity had been incomplete and interrupted, neither want, fear, pain, nor length of imprisonment, have been able to shake, in the least, their devoted attachment to it. A third had flinched under the fearful trial, and resumed his Judaism. There is strong evidence that Christianity is making extensive, though secret, progress among the Jews at Constantinople. Indeed, we think there is every reason to believe that the general extent

of avowed Christianity among the Jews is greatly less than that which is concealed from motives of fear, from aversion to, or mistrust of the Christians, and from, in very many cases, the dread of forfeiture of the means of existence, in nearly all of breaking the bonds of consanguinity and affection.—Three such cases of old Jews came lately within the knowledge of an individual of our own acquaintance, within a short space of time : two of them had been converted by the perusal of tracts circulated amongst their brethren, without having ever conversed with a missionary ; yet these men were known to be regularly performing the rites of their apparent religion in the synagogue.

To say the truth, it is not the number of conversions, actual, visible and averred, among a people circumstanced as the Jews now are, that we dwell on as the matter of the most importance. The great object is not at present to hunt down, as it were, single Jews to conversion, but to remove prejudices and soften the hearts, and dispose *towards* Christianity the minds of hundreds. Though providentially a beginning is made, too much of the general work remains to be done, to allow us to pursue, with much consecration of time to it, the labour of finishing the details. Let us suppose a colony settling on a soil naturally fertile, in a tropical climate, but incumbered with woods and stagnant waters, and consequently infested with agues and fevers ; the wisdom would be to fell the trees, and let in the sun and the wind to drain off the waters, to clear away the putrefying vegetable incumbrances—in short, to remove the origin of the evils. A similar course has been followed, in the main, with the Jews—Schultze having given the example of it ; and, accordingly, the results produced have rather been general than particular. In the kingdom of Poland, where the greatest prejudices existed, both against Christians and Christianity, a state of things fully justifying this view has been produced. From the circulation of tracts and of the scriptures, and from oral communications, the Jews have acquired a sufficient knowledge of Christianity, to have abated considerably of the hostile feelings with which they contemplated it ; and the earnestness and kindness with which the gospel has been proffered to them, have led them in almost every case, to give full credit to the sincerity and good will of those who conveyed it to them.—Their resort to the missionaries, and the access which the missionaries have to them, prove this incontestably. Involved in the cobwebs of the Talmud, they had actually lost sight of the Old Testament ; those who are well disposed are induced to study it, that they may understand the arguments addressed to them ; those who are ill disposed, do so in order

to be able to answer them; and in either case advantage is gained, for the Talmud is the great wall of separation between Judaism and Christianity. In general it may be affirmed, on the best and latest testimonies from the north and east of Europe, and from the Persian and Ottoman empires—testimonies which coincide completely, and in a way that is most striking—that very many of the Jews, bearing far less hostile feelings towards Christianity than they used to do, on account of its being professed by Gentiles, have so strong a conviction of the beauty of the morality of the gospel, that they do justice to it in spite of our imperfect practice of it, and say that the fault is in us, and not in our law. Many of the rabbis enrich and improve not only their moral lessons from its precepts, but even their views of the nature of the Messiah's reign, though looking to it in futurity, by clothing it with a spirituality wholly foreign to the Talmudical writings. One thing is of high importance indeed: and the fact cannot be controverted. Jews have, within these very few years, materially changed their conduct toward converted Jews. Strange to say, they now admit that they may be sincere Christians, allow them to preach the gospel to them, and hear them attentively. It was thus that the Jews at Ispahan acted towards Mr Wolff; they even maintained him when his funds were exhausted.

[To be continued.]

FROM THE CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE.

SPEECH IN THE GENERAL SYNOD OF ULSTER.

No inconsiderable portion of our readers, we well know, take a special interest in the *religious* as well as the *political* state of Ireland. To such we shall need no apology, for the space which the following speech will occupy in the pages of our Miscellany—We probably could insert nothing that would gratify them more. Nor will it be read without pleasure, and we think edification too, by all who are friendly to orthodox sentiments, and to maintaining in their integrity the formularies of the Presbyterian church, in our own country. All the usual arguments and allegations of the *no creed* advocates, are here exposed, and placed in a true and strong light; and the favourers of latitudinarian opinions, whether those opinions tend to Arianism, or to any other *ism* that militates with "the form of sound words" adopted by the Presbyterian church, will, if they peruse this speech, find themselves in the powerful grasp of a man of the first order of intellect, united with a fervent and rational piety; and if they are not silenced, it will be because "e'en though vanquished they can argue still."

We have been pretty familiar, for many years, with speeches made in deliberative bodies, both civil and ecclesiastical; and we do not speak without reflection when we say, we have never heard or read one, that, in all the properties of a masterly speech, we think superior to this. In order to understand it fully, it will be necessary to state, that for a length of time the Synod of Ulster has been polluted with a leaven of the Arian heresy, and that this was occasioned—mark it—by suffering men to enter the gospel ministry, exactly as was done at Geneva, by waiving a regard to the established orthodox standards of the church. Within a few years, however, there appears to have been, in the Synod of Ulster, an increase, at once, of orthodox sentiment and of fervent practical piety; and the consequence has been a determination by a majority of the Synod, to purge that body of the defilement by which it has been too long contaminated—Not indeed by deposing or excommunicating the Arians, but by using means to detach them, if it can be fairly done, from their present connexion; and at any rate to prevent the entrance of any more into the Synod. With this view a resolution was passed, we believe in the year before the last, that every member of that Synod, whether minister or ruling elder, should be required to make a declaration of his faith, in regard to the doctrine of the Trinity. In the printed minutes of the meeting of the Synod in June and July last, which are now before us, we find the following entry—

“Conformably to the resolution of the previous year, such ministers attending the present meeting, as were absent from the last, were severally called on to express their belief concerning the doctrine of the Trinity. Thirty-eight ministers voted ‘believe;’ four voted ‘not;’ one withdrew; and three did not answer to their names.”

At the next session, we find the following record:—

“A declaration of belief, respecting the doctrine of the Trinity, was required from such elders as had not been constituent members of last Synod. Fifty-nine voted ‘believe;’ fourteen voted ‘not;’ two protested against any such question being put; and two declined answering.”

At the sixth session of the Synod, June 27th, 1828—“After prayer, it was moved and carried, that the following regulations, recommended by the Committee of Overtures to the adoption of the Synod, &c. should be taken into immediate consideration.

OVERTURES.

I. That many of the evils which now unhappily exist in the General Synod of Ulster, have arisen from the admission of persons holding Arian sentiments, contrary to the accredited standards of this body, as founded on the Word of God; from the occasional admission of others, who, though nominally holding, in sound words and profession, the *form* of godliness, were yet deniers of the power thereof; and, consequently, destitute of that zeal which is necessary to the dissemination of the gospel.

II. That while we are individually bound to use all scriptural means to

guard against the continuance of these evils, it is also our duty, as a church, to adopt such regulations as may, with the divine blessing, prove effectual to prevent the introduction of ministers unenlightened by the Spirit of God; and to advance spiritual religion in our church courts and congregations.

III. That before any person be recognised as a candidate for the ministry, he shall, previously to entering a theological class, be enjoined to present himself at our annual meeting, to be examined by a committee of this Synod, respecting his personal religion, his knowledge of the scriptures, especially his views of the doctrines of the Trinity, original sin, justification by faith, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit; and, likewise, as to his motives for offering himself a candidate for the sacred office of the ministry; and that should any such examinant be found opposed to those doctrines, or appear to be destitute of vital godliness, he shall in no case be recognised as a candidate for the ministry, in this Synod.

IV. That students, after having finished their theological course, and their trials in the Presbytery, shall again present themselves for a similar examination, before the same committee; and it shall be the duty of that committee to ascertain their soundness in the faith, by requiring from them a statement of their views of the doctrines contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith.

V. That if any person thus licensed, be afterwards found not to preach the doctrines of the Trinity, original sin, justification by faith, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit; or to avow any principles in opposition to these doctrines, he shall not be continued in fellowship with this body.

VI. Persons who are already preachers in this body, but have not been licensed according to these regulations, shall, previously to ordination, be required to undergo a similar examination.

VII. Should any person be licensed or ordained, in opposition to these regulations, such license or ordination shall not be deemed valid by this body.

VIII. The committee for these examinations, shall annually be appointed, in open Synod."

These overtures, after an ardent and prolonged discussion, were all carried: and afterwards "Mr. Cook gave notice, that he intended to move, at the next meeting, [in 1829] for a consideration of the state of the Synod, with a view to reform existing evils." It appears that it was on rising to announce this notice, that Mr. Cooke delivered the subsequent speech—in which he plainly adverts to what had been offered by his opponents in the preceding debate. In reading the speech, we were struck with the similarity, or identity rather, of the arts, and arguments, and positions, and evasions, which Mr. Cooke had to encounter and expose, with those of latitudinarians among ourselves, and indeed, in every period of the church.*

* We have copied the above introduction from the *Christian Advocate*, not merely as an explanation of the circumstances which called forth this speech, but, also, because, in opinion, we coincide in general with Dr. Green. The correctness of the view taken, both in the speech and introduction, respecting the deposition or excommunication of the erroneous, depends entirely upon circumstances. If persons have been suffered to enter, "by waiving a regard to the established orthodox standards of the church," then, indeed, they cannot be justly excommunicated. The orthodox can only separate from them.—But if, on the other hand, the officers of the church have been faithful, and have not suffered any to enter without a solemn and public profession of their belief in, and adherence to, her "established standards," then she is bound to excommunicate; and cannot escape the chastisements of heaven, if she refuses. This, it is believed, will not be controverted, though it is greatly disregarded. "All the usual arguments and allegations of the *no creed* advocates (says Dr. Green) are here exposed, and placed in a true and strong light." And again; "We were struck with the similarity, or identity rather, of the arts, and arguments, and positions, and evasions, which Mr. Cooke had to encounter and

Authentic Report of the Speech of the Rev. Henry Cooke, delivered at the General Synod of Ulster, July, 1828.

Rev. Mr. Cooke addressed the meeting—On rising to give notice of a motion for a review of the state of this church, for the purpose of providing a remedy for existing evils, I hold it to be a duty I owe to myself and to this house, to give, first, an explicit statement of my views, and of the reasons upon which they are founded. I owe this statement to myself, that I may correct the misrepresentations of last year; and I owe it to this church, that all may be prepared to judge of the nature and purport of my intended motion.

On reading the reports of the Synod of last year, at Strabane, I was not a little surprised with the picture there drawn of my opinions and proposals. In these reports, I am represented as proposing that there should be some kind of committee, whose business would be to visit, read, and pray with all Arian ministers; and, if this were unavailing for their conversion, to suspend, or perhaps finally degrade them. This plan was called fanatical, and I was, consequently, honoured

expose, with those of latitudinarians among ourselves, and indeed, in every period of the church." This language is worthy of an aged and highly respectable minister of the Presbyterian church, and is satisfactory evidence, that he *knows* that the sole object of the "*no creed advocates*," is, to subvert the faith of God's people, to raze the foundations, and destroy the bulwarks that encompass Zion, and to bring anarchy and destruction into that glorious kingdom of grace which God has erected in this sinful world. There are others in the Presbyterian church, of the same mind with Dr. Green, who *know* the truth; but alas! have not sufficient energy to maintain and defend it against the popular current of the times. We have for several years looked with intense anxiety towards the Presbyterian church; because much depends upon her instrumentality, whether truth or error shall prevail in our land. We have witnessed, with unfeigned regret, her continued progress in apostacy. So rapid has been her course this way, that within the short space of twenty years, her standards have become a dead letter; and from a well ordered ecclesiastical body, she has become the receptacle of the most pernicious errors. She has suffered admissions, innumerable, "by waiving a regard to her standards." Many of her congregations have not only "*waived*," but have actually *expelled* her standards, declaring them unfit or unsuitable to be taught in Sabbath Schools. Many of her ministers have wrote and preached against her standards; and at this moment she exhibits latitudinarian principles sufficiently wide to embrace not only "*Arianism*," but "*any other ism*," which has the least title to the name of Christianity. Let us not be accused of misrepresenting this matter; for it is so plain and obvious, that the most superficial observer cannot be mistaken, unless he be wilfully blind. In John Wesley's time, even the Methodists were moderate, in comparison with some on whom we now have our eye; for Wesley never claimed the power of "*discerning spirits*;" but our modern Presbyterians appear to have it in perfection; and also the power to *produce* revivals. So much so, that some *Presbyterian* ministers divide their hearers into different classes, which they designate, saints,—hopeful,—anxious,—enquiring,—and careless sinners. And having thus classified them, they appoint for each class a different place of meeting. And if they can but succeed in getting one of their subjects into the anxious class, he is sure to ascend the scale in regular gradations, till he obtains "*a hope*." But to ascertain the nature and foundation of this hope, has ever baffled our research. We can find no account of its like in the Bible: indeed it appears to be a non-descript. Knowledge it has not; but it has plenty of zeal.

with the name of fanatic. My opponents exulted—my friends were surprised at the folly, as they called it, of such an absurd proposal; and I do assure you, sir, I have no friend more surprised than I was myself, when I found such a proposal ascribed to my invention. I speak, sir, under the correction of this house, when I say, that the man who has given me as the author of the plan has, to use the gentlest language, been guilty of misrepresentation. (Hear, hear.) I never made such a proposal to this house—(hear, hear.)—yet it has run the circuit of some Irish newspapers—has been blazoned in some English and Scottish Socinian magazines—and, if I recollect well, has been honoured with Italics, in order to arrest the attention of the readers by its folly or absurdity.

The plain fact, sir, is, that some such a proposal was made in this house; but it was not made by me. It was made by one of the most talented and eloquent opponents of my views of church fellowship. Whatever merit or demerit—whatever praise or blame belong to it, they are not mine—they are the sole, original, and undivided property of Dr. Wright; to whom I now thus publicly restore the entire and undisturbed possession.

Now the apostle speaks of a zeal according to knowledge. But this zeal talks about "*mighty christian efforts*"—"the power of moral suasion;" and is highly offended to hear any thing in relation to the efficacy of sovereign grace—dislikes imputed sin, and imputed righteousness, hates bigots, and indeed all who do not believe it their duty to run into the same excess. The subjects of this hope often get a *new hope*, unless they happen to lose the old one altogether; and this *new hope* appears to be as indefinite as the old one. They hate creeds, and take the Bible for their guide; yet assert that salvation may be obtained without the Bible. And wherever this hope has become general, new schemes, new notions, new doctrines, and new societies, spring up so fast in succession, and pass away with the same rapidity, that you will be unable to trace the rise, and mark the character of a single one, before it gives place to another, and becomes "as a tale that is told." What will be the result of these things, in relation to the United States, cannot be foreseen; but they indicate a spiritual dearth. Of the final success and establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom, we have no fears, whatever may become of us in our individual or collective capacity. But we are led to ask, how is it possible for such men, in the Presbyterian church, as Green, Miller, Alexander, Janeway, and others that might be named, who see the evils to which we have referred, in all their glaring deformity, and still suffer themselves to float down the current of defection, with scarce an effort or a struggle? They are "as a bow that shoots deceitfully." Like Ashur, they are willing to abide in their breaches. Judges v. 17. The necessity of reform cannot be greater in the Synod of Ulster, than it is in the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church. A few years more, and all attempts to restore her standards to their proper place, will be useless. And let it be remembered, that with her standards will go her Christianity; for it is an unquestionable truth, that the Bible must share the same fate. It will be found, in nine cases out of ten, that the opposition to creeds has its foundation in opposition to Christianity. It is a desire to obtain freedom from the law of God and the restraints of religion, that causes all this clamour about creeds and confessions. And when the church of God waives her publicly professed principles, she may grow, but it will be any thing but a growth of pure and undefiled religion. She may boast of her twelve hundred ministers, and her hundred Presbyteries, but each man will do what "seems good in his own eyes, and the people will "perish for lack of knowledge."

[ED. REL. MONITOR.]

The circumstances that led to the proposal were the following: In commenting upon my evidence, in which I had given my opinion that there were 35 Arians in this Synod, Dr. W. asked, "Who are these Arians? Will Mr. C. point them out to me, that I may visit them, read with them, pray with them, and thus endeavour to turn them from darkness to light, and from—?"—The sentence was cut short in this place, but it was again asked, "Will Mr. C. point out who they are?" I answered at once, "I was ready, in open Synod, to take the list, and, to the best of my judgment, point them out to Dr. W." I speak under the correction of the house, when I affirm, that this is a true statement of the case. (Hear, hear.) And, for my part, I must confess, that had there not been appended to the report of it, when attributed to me, the idea of suspension, or degradation, to give it an air of ridicule and persecution at the same time, I am far from seeing in it any absurdity; and, though I neither claim nor will receive the honour of the invention, I should be happy to think that Dr. Wright had, during the past year, carried his own plan fully into his practice.

How any man, in reporting our proceedings, could attribute to me the idea of employing suspensions or degradations, in punishment of men's opinions, is more than I can comprehend. Where I can, in the judgment of charity, attribute it to mistake, I shall not search for a worse origin; but this house will bear with me, when I thus publicly correct the error, and again repeat, that, to employ any ecclesiastical punishment whatsoever against any man's opinions never once entered into my mind. It must be in the recollection of this Synod, that I openly deprecated such a plan; that I compared the two sides of the Synod to the contending herdsmen of Abraham and Lot, in Gen. xiii., and proposed, that as we could not agree about the pasturing of our flocks, we should respectively make choice of the east, or west, or north, or south, and separate, that we might remain at peace. Instead of the horrible apparatus of suspensions and degradations, my plan was merely the unshackled exercise of our respective judgments, and a peaceable separation between men who could not agree. The correctness of this statement must be in the recollection of the house. (Hear, hear.)

Before I come to the subject immediately claiming our attention, I feel bound to advert to another mistake. I had said in my evidence before the Commissioners of Education, that I considered there were thirty-five Arians in the Synod. But when the report of the Synod of Strabane gave the appearance merely of ten, I was instantly set down as ignorant of the true state of the Synod, and guilty of a voluntary exaggera-

tion of the number of its Arian members. Various were the accusations I had to sustain under this head. First I was accused of speaking as if possessed of a "discerning of spirits," when I called men Arian who had never avowed their opinions. You will, therefore, bear with me when I set myself right with the public upon this subject. I pretend to no such extraordinary gift of discerning men's secret opinions; but I judge on the ordinary principles of the reason and revelation which God has bestowed upon me. Sir Walter Scott has more than once observed, that there is a sort of freemasonry, or natural tact, by which even children can discover persons that are likely to be kind to them. Even children can discover those slight symptoms of attention that escape the eye of unconcerned spectators. And I do believe there is a similar capacity in any man of ordinary attention to discover, by slight, and apparently trivial, circumstances, the dispositions and opinions of other men. But I need not have recourse to such principles of observation. In religion I know, or I discover, an Arian, just as in politics, a Whig knows a Tory, or a Tory knows a Whig. Men may vainly imagine their opinions are unknown, but there is no cloak of concealment impenetrable to the commonest observation.

Besides, I plainly stated to the Commissioners the principles upon which I judged of the number of Arians in the Synod. The first principle I stated to be, *open declaration*.—The second I stated to be, *defect in their declaration of sentiments*. There are a few members of this Synod who have always avowed their Arian sentiments. I knew them because they wore no cloak. There are others who have never openly avowed Arian doctrines: I knew them, not by what they avowed, but by what they did not avow. The doctrine of the Supreme Deity of the Word, who became flesh, forms such a noble and unshaken corner-stone for the temple of God, that he who holds it, as the foundation of his faith and hope, cannot conceal from the world the glories of his confidence. He who holds the Saviour to be "God manifest in the flesh"—who feels the full acceptance of his "coming into the world to save sinners"—he who acknowledges his dignity "as the mighty God," yet confides in his atonement as "the prince of peace"—he, I say, who thus believes, and thus feels, cannot be silent. The incontrollable thought takes full possession of the soul, and "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth must speak." When I, therefore, find a minister who preaches not, or who speaks not, of this doctrine, I believe, I know, he holds it not; for to believe, and yet be silent, are totally incompatible. Upon these principles I formed my judgment, and the result of this year's inquiry has fully established the

correctness of my estimate. The number of those who have openly avowed Arianism, or something akin to it, or who have, for the reasons they have stated, refused or declined to answer, now amounts to thirty-two. There are of the thirty-five, to whom I alluded, some who have not been yet present; and some who, from age, cannot be present; and when all shall thus be added, I am sorry to say, that so far from being incorrect in overrating the Arians of this body, I have underrated it by three or four members. The number of Arian members in this Synod, I would now say amounts, most probably to thirty-nine. Should any of the members, whom I have thus classified, deny the correctness of my opinions, they are at liberty so to do; and I shall rejoice in their denial. But before they do so, I beg them to consider the principles upon which I have formed the calculation, and demonstrate the error in my premises before they deny the conclusion.

I must now, sir, advert to a charge, in part, at least, directed against me, in the eloquent and learned address of my friend Mr. M'Cance. He traced the origin of these present discussions in Synod to the examiners before the Commissioners of Education: and though he did equally attach blame to the Arian examiners, yet as I was the first member of this body summoned before them, I presume I am entitled to the first or chief share of his disapprobation. I reply to my friend's charge, first, by rectifying a point in his chronology. This Synod will recollect, that in 1824 the Commissioners of Education gave to this body official notice of their appointment. At that same meeting, it will be recollected, that the subject of the Arianism of our members came under public consideration. Dr. Bruce, a divine of high standing in the literary world—a man who, from his local circumstances, was supposed well qualified to judge, had published to the world, in the preface to his sermons, that Arian opinions were “making silent but extensive progress amongst the members of the Synod of Ulster,” or words to that effect. The subject came before the Synod. The charge was indignantly repelled. Instead of making progress, it was universally admitted that Arianism was rapidly losing ground; and the unanimous contradiction of the Synod to the doctor's statement, was publicly sent forth to the world. I feel reluctantly compelled, by Mr. M'Cance's charge, to refer thus to matters that are gone by. I acquit Dr. B. of any wilful misrepresentation. He acted merely as other men too often do. Attached to his own favourite opinions, he too hastily concluded that other men felt a similar predilection. He published what he believed. But the Synod believed otherwise, and published a decided contradiction. Let not Mr. M'Cance, then, charge the origin of

these discussions upon me; but charge it to Dr. Bruce, who is justly entitled to the first portion of the praise or the blame that may be due. Praise, I call it; and Mr. M'Cance may call it by any other name he chooses.

It was on considering the state of the Synod, with a view to contradicting Dr. B.'s statement, that I was first led to examine the supposed quantum of our Arianism; and the accuracy of my estimate is now tolerably apparent. The publicity of the matter would no doubt lead the Commissioners of Education to the subject; and I answered, when they questioned me, according to my best knowledge and belief. But the blame of Mr. M'Cance seems to attach both to myself and others, because we answered the questions of the Commissioners; and he openly intimates, he would not have answered to any such interrogatories. Will Mr. M'Cance, however, consider, that the Commissioners had the royal warrant for examining upon oath; that the oath compelled us "to tell the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, in answer to such questions as should be asked;" and then let Mr. M'Cance say how we could have refused the answers we had already sworn to give.

But, in fact, I cannot see how any man could hesitate to answer to the truth of all he knows about religion. Whatever opinions I hold in religion, I glory in proclaiming them. The declaration may entitle me to the honourable soubriquet of enthusiast, or fanatic, or bigot, or what you will, but will never deter me from "giving to every man that asketh, an account of the hope that is in me;" or of plainly stating how far, in my opinion, error has made breaches in the walls of our Zion. If any man entrust me with a secret, I shall endeavour faithfully to keep it; but my opinions in religion, or my opinions of the religious sentiments of others, I shall never consider as a secret; but shall, at all times, openly declare them to every one who has a right or an interest in ascertaining their nature.

But whilst I thus vindicate myself and fellow-examinants from the charges adduced against us, I must also vindicate the majority of the Synod at Strabane, in issuing the direction for the attendance of members this year, to render an account of the doctrines they preach to their people. They have been accused by Mr. M'Cance of "dragging aged and venerable men from their distant homes, to bear testimony." I know the meaning of being dragged to death, as were the primitive Christians by Paul, before his conversion; I know the meaning of being dragged to execution, as were many of our Scottish forefathers, in the days of persecution; but I do confess I cannot understand how any man is said to "be dragged to give testimony," when there is no pain, no penalty, either to

the refusal or announcement, and the whole terrific proofs consist merely in asking a minister's opinion upon a fundamental doctrine of Christianity. No man who puts value upon what he believes to be truth can ever feel reluctant to declare his opinions. And no man declaring his opinions, without pain or penalty for refusal, can ever be said to be "dragged" to give testimony.

Against the whole past proceedings of the Synod, and against the object contemplated in my notice of a future motion, three broad grounds of objection are exhibited.

The first of these objections represents the proceedings of the Synod as opposed to "the right of private judgment." Whether our proceedings be, or be not, opposed to the right of private judgment, I shall not take upon me to determine; as I must confess myself, up till this hour, ignorant of what the "right of private judgment" can possibly mean. This is a startling confession of ignorance in the midst of "the march of mind," and in the full blaze of the "lights of the nineteenth century." But the fault is not mine. No member of Synod has condescended to explain what he means by "the right of private judgment." Does it mean that every man has a right to think as he pleases? as the lights of the late French, and of some modern schools of philosophy, seem to intimate; then, at once, I totally deny its authority. Let me look at thee, thou idol called "Right of private judgment!" I am told that if I deny to worship thee, I shall be branded as a rebel to thy high and legitimate powers. It may be so: yet will I not tremble before the philosophical idol men have conjured into existence, nor bow before the image they are pleased to set up. If by "right of private judgment" we are to understand a "right to think as we please," then what we have a *right* to think, it never can be *wrong* to think. We cease then to be accountable for our opinions—indeed accountability becomes impossible; for where there can be no wrong, the ordinary idea of accountability disappears. Then, as our actions arise from our opinions, where opinions cannot be wrong, actions cannot be wrong. Thus virtue and vice are confounded for ever, and the distinctions between moral right and wrong disappear from the universe.

But have we not been told, one thousand times, that the Protestant religion is built upon "the right of private judgment?" God forbid it were built upon any such flimsy foundation. The Protestant religion is built upon the command, the word of God; upon Prophets and Apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. There it rests unshaken upon the rock of ages, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

I know it has been the practice of many called philosophers, and of not a few called divines, to fix upon human principles, when they should have ascended to divine principles. Hence the modern doctrine concerning "right of private judgment." When I therefore deny all allegiance to this phantom king, I am bound to point out to this assembly what principles I consider to be entitled to the legitimate sovereignty. These seem to me to be the following:—

1. It is the *duty* of every man to search the scriptures.—John v. 39.

2. It is the *duty* of every man to be fully persuaded in his own mind. Rom. xiv. 5.

3. It is the *duty* of every man to receive the dictates and guidance of scripture, as the revealed will of heaven. 2 Tim. iii. 16.

4. A fourth principle, or rather corollary, necessarily follows from the foregoing, viz: That, as public bodies are composed of individuals, they, as public bodies, are subject to the same laws as individuals. Consequently, it is the duty of public bodies to search the mind of God in the scriptures, to be fully persuaded in their own minds, and, in all their decisions, to be guided solely by the authority of what God has revealed. Now, if these four principles include what is meant by the "right of private judgment," let me just entreat our opponents to reduce their phraseology to some more intelligible, some more definite, some more scriptural standard. And let me assure them, that, if these principles include their "private judgment," we will be the last in existence to recede from one iota of them. Let them convince us of departing from one of these principles, and we will thank them for the correction; but till they bring this conviction, which I am persuaded they will never attempt, we will say with Luther, when accused before the Diet—"Here we take our stand: we can pursue no other course: and God be our help."

Another ground of accusation taken against us is, that we are unfriendly to liberty. This ground is untenable; for we are the determined friends of the civil constitution of the empire. To our puritanical forefathers, even the infidel Hume has acknowledged, that Britain stands indebted for every principle of our freedom. We are the lineal inheritors both of their religious creed, and their political principles. Even our present effort to free ourselves from the shackles and thralldom of Arianism, is not an effort to enslave others to our opinions, but to liberate ourselves from their influence.

The last accusation brought against us is, that we are acting against charity. Last year at Strabane, a little after the commencement of our discussions, the charges were again and

again rung upon "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Ephes. iv. 8. I did there openly accuse, of erroneous interpretation, those who employed it. I did so, by reading the whole context referring to the "one faith, one Lord, one baptism," &c. and also by directing attention to 1 John v. 6. "It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth." Now, as the doctrine of Trinitarians and of Arians cannot both be true, I argued they cannot both come under the "unity of the Spirit." They would more properly rank under the "contradictions of the Spirit," if such an idea were possible. It is not a little remarkable, that not a single speaker has this year employed this once favourite text. And now I will venture to prophesy, that I shall as certainly reform another quotation, upon which the charge of uncharitableness has been brought against us. "Charity," we have been told, "suffereth long, and is kind, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." But mark, sir, how exactly in these quotations, they have followed the example of that noted polemic, who, wanting to prove angel worship from the Bible, wrote, in his treatise, this proof, "I fell at the feet of the angel to worship him." He quoted defectively—they have quoted defectively; for they have forgot the important additions which the Apostle makes to the character of charity, "charity rejoiceth in the truth." Now, I do defy any man to say, that Trinitarianism and Arianism are both true; consequently, charity cannot rejoice in their junction.

Having now, sir, cleared away the rubbish with which, during a period of twelve months, misrepresentation has been permitted to disfigure the subject; and having now beaten in the advance guards of our opponents, we come to take our ground, and establish our defences. Scripture is adduced against us; we shall prove that we stand on it. Reason is brought against us; we shall fearlessly appeal to its decisions. Custom is brought against us; we shall appeal to honesty—The nature of our views has been misunderstood or misrepresented; we shall endeavour to explain and vindicate our proceedings.

1. We take, then, as our first position—That it is the duty of every Christian, and of every church, to try the doctrines of those who preach. 1 John iv. 1—"Beloved, believe not every Spirit, but *try* the Spirits whether they be of God." Rom. xvi. 17—"Now, I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the *doctrine* which ye have heard, and avoid them." 2 John 9—"Who-soever transgresseth, and abideth not in the *doctrine of Christ*, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto

you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed." Rev. ii. 2—"I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience; and thou hast *tried them which say they are APOSTLES*, and are not."

Now, sir, for my own part, I do declare, that I cannot discover how these plain texts of scripture can, by possibility, be explained otherwise than to establish my first proposition.—Mr. Carlisle has, I know, said of some of them, they are directions to private Christians, and not to churches. I cannot admit the distinction; what is a rule to one Christian, must be a rule to ten thousand. But, even admitting it in its full import, still the directions to the Romans, and to the Laodiceans in Revelations, are directions to churches. The duty thus expounded to two primitive churches, must be a rule to others, even to the end of the world.

2. We take, as a second position—That the primitive scriptural method of "trying the Spirits," was by plain questions on the fundamental doctrines of the gospel. Our Saviour sets the example. Matt. xv. 13—"Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" 15—"But whom say ye that I am?" Matt. xxii. 42—"What think ye of Christ?" "Whose Son is he?" When they answer, *even in scripture language*, he is the Son of David, our Saviour puts an additional question, to ascertain in *what sense* he was called the Son of David. 45—"If David then call him Lord, how is he David's son? And no man was able to answer him a word." Had the examiners lived till our days, we had taught them two answers: In the first place, they could have replied, we are teachers of the people, and are therefore under no obligation to answer; or, they might have replied, we have given you an answer in scripture language; be content with that; we go no farther than our guide. But I forget that we are now in the nineteenth century; and that we have consequently outstripped these ancients in the "march of mind."

3. We take as a third position—That it is the duty of every preacher of the gospel, to give to the church of which he is a member, an account of the doctrines which he preaches. Gal. ii. 2—"And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel, which I preach among the Gentiles; but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run a hard race in vain." Here the Apostle Paul hesitated not to give to the church a retrospective view of the gospel he had been preaching for many years past. And that not even to the churches among whom he had been preaching, but to the church at Jerusalem, where he had not been since his conversion. It will require no argument to prove,

that what Paul did, we, as successors of the Apostles, are bound, after his example, to do.

4. Our fourth position is—That error in any of the fundamental doctrines of the gospel is destructive to the churches. 2 Tim. ii. 17—"And their word will eat as doth a canker; of whom is Hymeneus and Philetus; who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is already past; and overthrow the faith of some. I now put it home to my orthodox brethren, for to them I specially address myself; and I call upon them to answer, if an error respecting the resurrection "eateth as a canker," and "overthroweth the faith of some," what must be the effect of an error respecting the Lord Jesus Christ himself? Will it operate as a sanative medicine? Will it establish the faith of the church? Let them answer this to God, and their own consciences.

5. We consider it the duty of the teachers and rulers of churches, to refuse their authority to the preaching of doctrines which, in their consciences, they believe to be erroneous, and subversive of the faith once delivered to the saints. 1 Tim. i. 3—"I besought thee to abide at Ephesus, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine." I do now beseech my orthodox brethren—(I use the word orthodox distinctively, not offensively)—I do beseech them, I say, to pause over this text, and apply it as the measure of their own conduct. Do they believe that Arianism is the doctrine of the gospel? Do they not believe that it is subversive of the gospel? Yet do they not, year after year, give their public license to Arians to preach the gospel? Do they not, year after year, ordain them to minister in the gospel? And have they ever made an attempt to tell them that the Supreme Deity of Christ is the foundation of the gospel? And have they ever attempted to charge them that they preach no other doctrine? Our fathers in the ministry, by the manner in which they conducted this church, have been instrumental, I grieve to say it, in laying a snare for the feet of us, their sons. We have, accordingly, been entangled in it, and are so till this hour; and I do beseech my brethren, for the sake of consistency—for the sake of scripture truth—to ponder the paths of their feet, and make an earnest, an humble, a persevering effort, to free themselves and future generations from this unhappy entanglement.

6. We consider it, upon scripture warrant, to be the duty of the churches to follow after *uniformity*; not a uniformity to be produced by pains and penalties, and legal enactments; but by a strict adherence to scripture truth and apostolical practice. 1 Cor. i. 10—"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same

thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined in the same mind, and in the same judgment." Now, are Trinitarians and Arians joined in the same mind, in the same judgment? Do they speak the same things in their private intercourses or their public ministrations?—They are divided about the very first principles of religion—about the great object of their testimony; and while they remain contradicting one another, yet apparently forming one church, it can only serve to increase the doubtings of the skeptic, or create suspicions in men's minds of their mutual insincerity. "The great object for which Christ erected a church was to bear witness of him." Matt. xxiv. 14; and except there be uniformity in that witness, I cannot discover upon what principles her testimony is entitled to acceptance.—The orthodox member testifies, that Christ is "God manifested in the flesh"—the Arian member testifies, "he is some created angel"—the Socinian member testifies "he is a mere peccable mortal like himself;" and the orthodox member licenses and ordains the witnesses whose testimony is so directly opposed to that which he himself has delivered. I do most respectfully, yet earnestly, beseech my brethren to weigh these considerations in scripture scales. It is now high time that we "awake out of our sleep." The night is far spent; the day is at hand. Let us watch and be sober, that at such time as the Lord cometh, we may be found as servants doing his holy will.

I believe we have scripture authority for endeavouring to purify the church from the errors in doctrine or in practice, that may from time to time arise. 2 Tim. ii. 21—"The Apostle has been addressing Timothy on his duties as a christian minister. In the 17th verse he has impugned the erroneous doctrines of Hymeneus and Philetus, who had overthrown the faith of some. And now, in the 21st verse, he adds, "If a man shall purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work." A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition reject." 1 Tim. vi. 5—"From such withdraw thyself." 2 Thess. iii. 6—"Now, we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received from us."

I am fully aware how my friend, Mr. Carlisle, will criticise these texts, and endeavour to show that they are inapplicable to our circumstances. He may do so. Yet I feel it necessary to suggest to him the following questions. Was the duty of Timothy, a christian minister, intended as an example to other

christian ministers? Was it not his duty to purge the church of the erroneous teaching of Hymeneus and Philetus? Is Arianism, or is it not, heresy? I confess I dislike the use of the word heresy, because it has been so abused by the church of Rome; yet, as it is a scriptural term, I take it as I find it. I use it in no invidious sense, but merely to obtain a plain answer to a plain question. I ask farther, if we are commanded to *withdraw* ourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, even in the common concerns of life, are we to remain united with those who walk disorderly in the church of Christ? I put the question home to my orthodox brethren, are the doctrines of Arianism according to the tradition received from Paul? If they are not, do not they who preach them walk disorderly? And is it not our duty to withdraw ourselves from them?

I have thus, sir, endeavoured to take and illustrate some of the scripture grounds upon which we rest our cause. And I come now to exhibit the reasonableness of the means by which, under the good providence of God, we propose to advance the purity of this church.

[*To be continued.*]

The Difference between the Testimonies of the Associate Synod in America and the Associate Synod of Original Seceders in Scotland, on the head of Civil Government and National Covenanting.

To preserve the truth pure and entire, and in this manner to exhibit it in her public profession, is the great duty incumbent on the church, in the character of a witness for Christ. In order to the proper discharge of this duty, it becomes her to search diligently for it as for hid treasures. And amidst the multiplicity of discordant views which claim her notice, however difficult the task, she must "prove all things, and hold fast that which is good." In doing this faithfully, painful sacrifices sometimes become necessary; the bonds of christian fellowship, strong and tender and long affectionately cherished, must occasionally be burst asunder, and the right hand of church fellowship be sometimes withheld, where the strongest ties of nature and of friendship make such withholding peculiarly painful. Still, where duty to Christ, his church, and the truth, calls, every other opposing voice must be disregarded. The recent changes which have taken place in the state of the Secession Church in Scotland, of which the Associate Church in the United States has always been considered a part, painfully illustrate the truth of these remarks. By one branch of that church, the Associate Church in this country was originally planted. In its infancy, even at the distance of 3,000 miles, when weak and struggling for existence, it was cherished, encouraged and supported with a mother's care; and when brought low, was again raised up and strengthened; till with the good hand of God upon us, blessing the means exerted with unwearied care, we have grown to our present stature. United in the profession of the same truth, the fellowship existing between the two bodies, or rather parts of the same body, was affectionate, interesting, and useful, especially to us. Perhaps never before did so sincere affection, so entire confidence, and so perfect an agreement in the truth, pervade any body so extensive, as did pervade every part of the Associate Church in Britain and America.—

Though far separated in respect of place, it was the "good and pleasant sight of brethren dwelling together in unity." But this was not to be continued.

In 1819 the tide of popular feeling in favour of a union with the other branch of the Secession, usually denominated *Burgher*, rose so high as to carry every thing before it. It seemed as if nothing but union would satisfy them. It is but natural to suppose that not a few of the number of the General Associate Synod felt the influence of this extraordinary excitement, and in their eagerness to accomplish an object so desirable in itself, would be less careful than they ought to have been, of the terms on which it was effected. With the result your readers are acquainted. A union of the two bodies, under the title of the United Associate Synod, was effected on the 13th of September, 1820. Twelve members of the General Associate Synod, who could not go into the union, with the views they had of it, were by this event, without any fault of theirs, painfully separated from their former brethren.—Wearied with unavailing contendings; distressed at separation from brethren deservedly dear, and with seeing truth, as they considered it, fallen in the streets; and dispirited on account of their fewness of numbers, they set about raising the fallen banner of the Secession testimony, and constituted the Associate Synod, adhering to the Testimony and the profession so long maintained by the General Associate Synod. In this condition they continued, but without gaining much strength, till the 18th May, 1827, when they formed a union with the Constitutional Presbytery, under the style and title of "THE ASSOCIATE SYNOD OF ORIGINAL SECEDERS."

In the mean time, the United Associate Synod, for a season, rapidly increased in numbers and external prosperity. Nevertheless, the fruits of this union were often bitter. That affection, confidence, and strong attachment to truth, which so eminently distinguished the members of the General Associate Synod, were now greatly impaired; while distrust, jealousies, and petty and unworthy contentions succeeded in their place. The truth seems to be,—many, on calm reflection, became dissatisfied with themselves, as well as with the union they had so eagerly formed. The connexion formerly subsisting between the Associate Church in America and the General Associate Synod, rendered it necessary for the former to consider how this connexion was to be affected by this event; and with which, if any, of the two it should still be continued. The thought of breaking the bond of connexion which so long subsisted, by casting off either those who entered the union, or those who protested against it, was painful. Discussions on the subject, long and earnest, were adjourned from year to year; and it was not till the meeting of Synod in May, 1826, that they came to the resolution declaring themselves "not in a state of union with the United Associate Synod." And farther "testifying against the said union as a defection from a covenanted reformation." This last was carried by the casting vote of the Moderator, and against both, protests were entered. Thus was this long contested matter settled, and, perhaps, as it should have been. For if there was a deserting of some principles maintained by us, and formerly by the General Associate Synod, (about which there was but one mind,) it was right for our own safety and the cause of truth among our hands, that ministers from the United Associate Synod be required, in order to admission, to approve of our principles. The expedient of requiring this, without formally declaring a separation or expressing a judgment of the character of the union, though apparently milder, amounted in fact to the same thing, while the other has the advantage of being more consistent. The danger, to the cause of truth, arising from entangling alliances with churches which do not hold the *same principles*, is very great. Of this, the effects of the alliance between the Presbyterian Church, in this country, and the Congregational churches of New-England, furnish an example. It is then, perhaps, better, as it is certainly safer, if the profession of two churches be not *entirely the same, and more especially, if in some points they are opposed*, that they should not be considered as united.

It was not till the meeting of Synod in 1827, that they explicitly recognised the *Protesting Brethren* in Scotland as "continuing one church with us," and

engaged in maintaining the same testimony in behalf of a covenanted work of reformation. It is somewhat singular, that a fortnight before this resolution was passed, these same Protesting Brethren had ceased to exist in the character in which they were contemplated by this decision,—had laid aside their separate standing and their testimony as the Associate Synod,—and entered as above mentioned, upon the ground of *New Testimony*, into the Union composing the body called THE ASSOCIATE SYNOD OF ORIGINAL SECEDERS. This change rendered it again necessary for the Associate Synod in America to consider whether the profession of this new united body is the same with their own, and whether it shall be considered as one church with them. On the consideration of this subject the Synod entered at their last meeting, and as will be seen by referring to the minutes, (*Religious Monitor*, p. 45,) it has been referred to the several Presbyteries to report upon the *Testimony* at the next meeting of Synod. It has occurred to me, that some discussion of this subject, in the pages of the *Religious Monitor*, might be useful: I have therefore sent you the following comparisons between the New and the Old Testimony, and the Testimony of the Associate Church, as the result of my own investigations of the subject, which, if you please, are at the service of your readers.

The Testimony of the Associate Synod of Original Seceders, the declaratory statements of which have already been given in the *Monitor*, vol. 4. p. 203 and 320, I think must be considered as a masterly and lucid statement and defence of the great doctrines of the Reformation; and in respect of the plan or manner of its exhibition, is perhaps the best that has hitherto been adopted. As the truth in general which it contains is pointed against a somewhat different set of errors, which are prominent in that country, from those which are the prevailing and more prominent errors in this, the body of the work of course wears a somewhat different aspect from the Testimony of the Associate Church in America. Yet there is throughout, with few exceptions, a perfect harmony and agreement in the truth. The points in which a difference is visible, are chiefly those which separated the Constitutional Presbytery and the Associate Synod, previous to this union; and whatever it be, is as really and as much different from the Testimony of the Associate Synod in Scotland, which it supercedes, as from ours. The origin of the Constitutional Presbytery is stated in the *Narrative*, p. 61, and is given in the *Religious Monitor*, vol. 4, p. 204 and 205, where the ground of their separation is stated to be their objection to the new statement of their principles made by the General Associate Synod in 1801, as in their view "*departing from the received doctrine, on the connexion between church and state, and the national character and obligation of our covenants.*"

It might be important here to ascertain what were the precise views of the Constitutional Presbytery on these points. It is certain they were different from what the General Associate Synod considered the "received doctrine," even as expressed in their Old Testimony; for they considered that to be precisely what they have expressed, with greater precision and clearness, in the new. (See Introduction to the *Narrative* enacted in 1803, p. 12.) As the Constitutional Presbytery never published any particular testimony on these points, but continued to adhere to the Judicial Act and Testimony, of course with their particular views of what they called the received doctrine on the contested points, we have no other source of information than their individual productions, and the controversial writings of the time. The fullest view of this matter is most probably to be obtained in a pamphlet published about the time of their separation, entitled "*Statement of the difference,*" &c. but of which I cannot avail myself at present. At all events, they contended for a more intimate connexion between church and state, and for a greater extent of power being conceded to the Christian magistrate than is admitted in the Testimony of the General Associate Synod; and also for a totally different view of the national character of the covenants from that which it exhibits. So important did this difference appear in their view, (and they were men whose talents and learning entitled their views to attentive considera-

tion,) that they considered their separation from the body warrantable and necessary; for it is to be remembered that they were not thrust out, as the original Seceders were from the established church; but forbearance was formally tendered to them, with the admission of their protest, on the sole condition of their not opposing the Testimony as adopted by the Synod. (See Review of the proceedings, &c. by Rev. A. Bruce, p. 34.)

As the views expressed in the Testimony of 1801, and the Testimony of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, on these points, perfectly harmonize, it was to be supposed their opposition to the latter would be as strong as to the former, and their actual statements correspond to this conclusion. After speaking of the changes in the General Assembly and other American churches, the Rev. A. Bruce adds, concerning the Associate Church in America, p. 354 of his Review above quoted—

“The members of the Presbytery of Pennsylvania recognised by the General Synod in Scotland, who had protested against these articles, yet did not continue long proof against the general *influenza*. Scarcely was their new testimony transmitted, than it was followed with a new acknowledgment and bond for covenanting; their act against subordination, or appeals to a Synod in Scotland, of which the purport was given, p. 22; and a new formula of questions for ministers and elders, the archtype of that lately adopted by the Synod, in which they required an assent to the Westminster Confession, as received in their testimony; to the whole of that testimony itself; to the covenants entered into by the church of Scotland, as explained by that Presbytery; to the form of church government as testified for by them; promising subjection by elders to their session only; and to follow no divisive course from *that church*, &c. Here certainly was a scheme of very extensive and rapid change, in some things near a-kin to that made by the General Synod.”

In a letter to Mr. Marshall, in the same Review, p. 367, he says—

“As for any particular sentiments entertained by your Presbytery about the power of the civil magistrate *circa sacra*, I never stated any public quarrel, farther than to express dissatisfaction with *the imposition of new explications* upon that subject, not only on all the members of Presbytery, but indirectly also upon all their brethren here.”

I intended, as far as the works within my reach will enable me, to furnish extracts to show the peculiar sentiments of the Constitutional Presbytery on these points, from which I think it would appear that they are in substance, and often in expression, the same with those expressed in the Testimony of the Associate Synod of Original Seceders. But lest I occupy too much of your time, I add only one extract from the “Review, &c.” on the subject of Covenanting,—the accordance of which with the New Testimony, and its opposition to the views of the General Associate Synod and the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, will be readily perceived. It is as follows—

“May not men, and bodies of men, witness to the same cause, and engage to the same duties, in distinct capacities? And may not they sometimes sustain a double capacity in the performance of the same act; which at other times may be separated? What did the Secession as a covenanting body witness for? Was it only for some supernatural doctrines of Christianity, or ordinances peculiar to churches? Or was it for the whole contents of the former covenants in behalf of a public reformation in all the branches of it, and the various duties belonging to the different classes of men in the nations, political, moral, and civil, as well as those strictly ecclesiastical? As members of a nation, or civil state, morally obligated by former covenants, or guilty of the breach of them, can any pretend to a renovation of them, without considering their relation to and interest in the civil community, as well as that relation they have to a church? If the General Synod now acknowledge these covenants to have been national, only ‘because persons of all ranks, and the great body of the nation, at least in Scotland, joined in them,’ how can it be proved, that they ever were the national covenants of the two most populous of these three nations? In this case, is there not reason to say, that they (the General

Associate Synod) practise not only a new mode, but a new species of covenanting: and that they have made a new church covenant of their own, without renewing national covenants in any sense of the words?"

See also p. 224.

The doctrine of the Associate Church in this country on the *connexion between church and state, and the power of the civil magistrate in religious matters*, is expressed in the Testimony, Part I. Sect. 15—16, 17 and 18. The sum of these statements is—That the kingdom of Christ and the kingdoms of this world, are entirely separate and independent kingdoms—That as the officers of the church, as such, have nothing to do with the government of the state, so the civil magistrate, as such, has nothing to do with the church; "*his whole duty, as a magistrate, respects men—not as Christians, but as members of civil society.*" The appointed means for promoting the kingdom of Christ are *all of a spiritual nature.*" With these views the Testimony of the General Associate Synod, enacted in 1801, fully harmonizes, as will appear by referring to the Introduction to the Narrative, pp. 10, 11, 12, and Chap. XXIII. of the Testimony. The same views are very accurately expressed in the Declaration and Defence of the Associate Presbytery's Principles concerning the present civil government in Britain. See Religious Monitor, Vol. IV. p. 324, note. Alexander and Rufus, p. 431. Gib's Display, Vol. I. p. 311.

The doctrines of the Associate Synod of Original Seceders on the same subject is laid down in the historical part of their Testimony, p. 62—70; and is given in full, Religious Monitor, Vol. III. p. 234—241; from a careful perusal of which, I think an important difference of views between the two churches will be manifest. The former asserts that "*the whole duty of the civil magistrate, as such, respects men—not as Christians, but as members of civil society.*" The latter (especially sect. 3d) declares it to be the duty of nations and rulers, in their national and civil capacity, to "recognise and give public countenance to revealed religion—by their laws and administration to *provide* that its salutary influence may have free course and be diffused through all orders and departments of society"—"To have their whole laws framed and administered in such a manner as to be subservient to its interests, and to provide all *needful* legal securities in behalf of the scriptural profession of it," &c. These statements are as definite as any that are given, and while I think it must be admitted they go much farther than the doctrines of the *Associate Church*, they still appear vague and unsatisfactory in a high degree. What, for example, is included in "*providing* for the diffusion of revealed religion through all orders," &c.? To *what extent* are "laws to be framed and administered *subservient* to its interests?" What "*legal securities*" shall be deemed "*needful*," and what "*profession*" shall be judged "*scriptural*," in behalf of which, to the exclusion of all others, the favour and influence of the state is thus to be exercised? And what shall be considered "*attempts to undermine and supplant*" this scriptural profession, and which these legal securities are to oppose and put down? And how is it possible to make and administer laws in favour of any particular profession of religion, which will not make a *difference* in the civil condition of those, who, though equally peaceable and profitable members of the body politic, yet cannot conscientiously adopt this favoured profession? Look to the operation of these principles in the establishment of Episcopacy in England and Ireland, and of a particular section of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland, and you are furnished with a practical illustration of their nature. How much more just, simple, and scriptural, the assertion of the Associate Church above quoted!—"The appointed means for promoting the kingdom of Christ are all of a spiritual nature."

The difference between the two churches on the head of *Public Covenanting*, is equally evident. The doctrine of the Associate Church is contained in the Testimony, Part I. Sect. 20. 22 and 23. Part III. Art. 5. and in the Act concerning Public Covenanting, at the end of the Testimony; all which fully harmonize with the doctrine of the General Associate Synod, expressed

in their Testimony, Chap. XVIII. pp. 57—69. The doctrine of the Associate Synod of Original Seceders is contained in the historical part of the Testimony, pp. 70—72; and in the doctrinal part, Chap. XVII. Sect. III. pp. 136—143. These statements are given in the Religious Monitor, Vol. III. pp. 241—243. Vol. IV. pp. 229—232, and p. 322. As these documents are in the hands of most of your readers, I shall, without quoting them at length, for the sake of brevity, run a parallel between the doctrines contained in these different statements.

1. The Associate Church, in harmony with the late General Associate Synod, believe, that covenanting is the duty of *church members* only, and of a church in its *ecclesiastical* capacity, and may be called *national* when the number of these is so great that they may be said to constitute the body of a nation, *and for no other reason*. Besides the Testimony, this doctrine is strongly asserted and clearly illustrated by Mr. Paxton, in his "Enquiry into the Obligation of Religious Covenants," &c. published in 1801, p. 43, in which,—evidently in opposition to the doctrines of those who afterwards formed the Constitutional Presbytery, so strongly agitated at that time,—he says—

"We know not what a nation or kingdom, as such, has to do with this duty more than with the Lord's supper, or any other ordinance. What has this spiritual duty, which is the business of the church alone, to do with the limits of an earthly kingdom, or with the particular forms of civil government? Did the apostolic churches mould themselves upon these civil, political, or local institutions or circumstances? Or, in what part of the New Testament is it required, or any encouragement given to attempt it? All the people of a nation may, and ought to be church members, and in this capacity enter into covenant to discharge their respective duties to God, to themselves, and to their neighbour, with integrity: and this may, with sufficient propriety, be called National Covenanting. But, in any other sense, the term is inconsistent with the spiritual nature of the Messiah's kingdom."

On the same subject, Mr. Allan, in his work on Covenanting, pp. 170, 171, says—

"Because Seceders cannot consent to have covenanting represented in the light of a civil or political institution, but consider it purely as a religious ordinance, by which God is to be glorified in the churches of the saints; therefore a few ministers, who have lately deserted their profession, take it upon them to assert, that we are become real enemies to national covenanting, and have even gone the length of averring, that we deny the warrantableness of national churches. Should any ask for proof of either of these allegations, they have the word of these men for them, and that is all they are to expect. Both charges, however, are mere unmerited defamation. We never once entertained a doubt, either about the lawfulness of national churches, or of national covenanting, when the term *national* is properly understood. The whole foundation of both charges lies in their affixing one idea to the term *national*, and our affixing another. They consider nothing as entitled to the character of national, but what is either in some measure political in its very nature, or has received the formal sanction of the civil government, to give it authority; but we, on the other hand, call any thing national that is practised by the great body of the nation, let the nature of it be what it will, and whether it has received the formal sanction of civil authority or not. In this sense do all men use the term, when they speak of national sins."

See the whole passage down to p. 172, and also same work, pp. 75, 76.

The Associate Synod of Original Seceders, on the other hand, while they admit of covenanting by church members in an ecclesiastical capacity, yet assert that covenanting is "capable of various modifications, and cannot be restricted to men merely in the character of church members." "That a nation may enter into a new covenant in its religious character, the public authorities, ecclesiastical and civil, concurring to promote it." Test. pp. 70, 80, and 139; and they testify against all who deny this doctrine. p. 139.

2. The Associate Church, in covenanting, embraces in her bond only matters purely religious, disapproves of mixing things civil and religious in the same covenant, and disapproves of the national covenants of our ancestors, in so far as there was in them a blending of these together. See Act concerning Covenanting, p. 147. and Test. Part I. Sect. XX. and also Allan, and Paxton, as above. The Associate Synod of Original Seceders, on the other hand, not only do not disapprove of mixing things civil and religious, but assert its propriety. "Such vows to God," say they, "may relate to the intrinsic concerns of the church. Or they may be extended to the external state and interests of nations in reference to religion. Test. p. 70.

From the above comparison, the following conclusions seem unavoidable—
1. That the Associate Synod have deserted their testimony on these points, and adopted in their full extent the principles of the Constitutional Presbytery.

2. That there is a real and important difference and opposition of sentiments, as far as it regards these matters, between the Testimony of the Associate Church and the Associate Synod of Original Seceders, a difference nearly if not quite as great as that for which the Constitutional Presbytery considered themselves warranted in originally separating from the communion of the General Associate Synod.

3. That the doctrines of the two bodies being not only different from, but opposed to each other, it is not possible for an individual to hold both: and therefore a person from that body, entering into the communion of the Associate Church in America, must either be required to renounce his former views, or be admitted with sentiments avowedly hostile to a part of her profession. To do the latter, would be to destroy that unity in the faith which is essential to peace and profitable fellowship, as the history of the American churches, in past years, mournfully proves. The Associate Synod, therefore, has wisely provided against this evil, in the Article on Church Communion, Testimony, Part. III. Art. II. p. 113. "To receive," she says, "into communion, those who are determined enemies to any part of that profession the church makes, would be to destroy, not to build the house of God. The admission of such is the destruction of christian fellowship among the members of a church. There can be no communion in prayers, in thanksgiving, in *striving together for the faith of the gospel*, where there is no unity of heart and mind about that faith. When one is casting down what another is building up, there may be the name, but there cannot be the truth of christian communion."

There appears, then, to be but one course left for this church to follow, and which faithfulness to our brethren in Scotland, to the truth for which as witnesses for Christ we are bound to testify, and a due regard to unity and peace in our own borders, compel us, however reluctant, to adopt; and that is, to disapprove of the dereliction of principle involved in the adoption of the New Testimony, to declare that we do not consider ourselves in a state of union with that united body, as has already been done in the case of the United Associate Synod; and that ministers and members from that church can be received by us, only in the way of formally acceding to our principles. B.

SABBATH MAILS.

This subject has produced a considerable excitement in the community of late, in consequence of the petitions which were presented to Congress during their late session, praying that the transportation of the mails on the Sabbath might be prohibited. We have neglected to notice the subject until this time, that we might obtain something definite in relation to it. And from what has been said pro and con, the following facts appear to be established, viz:—

1st. That the government of the United States is practically atheistical.

2d. That the great mass of the people of the United States have lost all due sense of the authority of divine revelation.

For the truth of the first position, we refer the reader to the report of Col. Johnson of Ky. chairman of the committee to whom was referred these petitions, on the part of the Senate, and the unanimous adoption of the report by

that body. We never have read a more plausible infidel production, nor one more calculated to convince a people, already verging towards infidelity, that they are under no obligation to obey the commandments of God.

For the truth of the second position, we refer to the general approbation which has been bestowed upon Col. Johnson's report. And with the exception of a few periodicals, professedly religious, this approbation has been nearly universal.

The pride of the statesman, and his ignorance of the subject on which he writes, are clearly manifested in this report. The Colonel assumes as profound a knowledge of theology as he may be supposed to possess of politics and military tactics; but is very unfortunate in calling the Sabbath a *Jewish* institution; and, instead of convincing the reader of his theological knowledge, rather leaves the impression, that, if he has a Bible, it has never been the subject of his study. Having made this display of his theology, he talks seriously about an established religion, which every sensible man knows to be a mere bugbear to alarm the ignorant, and produce effect. He is terribly fearful that Jews and Seventh-day Baptists will suffer, if Congress should stop the mails on the Sabbath!—says that Congress has no right to legislate on the subject, though it appears that Congress formerly passed a law *commanding* those persons who are connected with the post-office department to violate the Sabbath. He apprehends incalculable mischief from a discontinuance of Sabbath mails—the revenue of the department would suffer—the commercial community would suffer—private expresses would be employed, and thus violate the day more than a continuance of the Sabbath mails. This may be true to a certain extent; but it would save the nation from the guilt of enacting laws *against* the Sabbath. He says it would be highly injurious to the nation in times of war, to grant the prayer of the petitioners, though the petitions were presented in a time of profound peace, and had no reference to a time of war. It is universally admitted that works of necessity and mercy are to be attended to on the Sabbath, though persons may not violate the Sabbath under *pretence* of necessity and mercy, when such is not the fact.

We quote the following questions from the *Rochester Observer*, not because they are the most able defence of the petitioners that we have seen, but on account of their brevity.

A few questions to those who appear to feel so much apprehension on the subject of the measures now in agitation for the better observance of the Sabbath.

On what are our civil liberties based, but on the virtue of the people?

What other standard of morality is there, of universal application, than that which is found in the scriptures?

Does not the history of the world show that ignorance and irreligion have been the uniform precursors to loss of liberty to the mass of the people, and of the decline of national prosperity? What country, or nation, or society, has ever been distinguished for a strict observance of the *other nine* requirements of the Moral Law, that has disregarded the *fourth*?

If Congress have no authority to *repeal* the law requiring the Mail Contractors to transport the mail, and post offices to be opened on the Sabbath, by what authority was the law *passed*?

If the Sabbath is beneficial, merely as a *civil institution*, as most acknowledge, is it not most so to the poor and labouring classes, by giving them a day of rest, and an opportunity of reading and of attending public worship, and do not the present post office regulations, in these respects, operate with peculiar rigour upon these classes of society?

If Congress are so scrupulous about giving a preference to those religious denominations who regard the 1st day of the week as the Sabbath, over the small number of Jews and Seventh day Baptists who regard the last day of the week as holy time, would they hesitate to declare *war* because there are those in the country who believe that war is in *no case* justifiable?

Or would they hesitate to pass a law requiring capital punishment because there are many persons of the first respectability among their constituents, who believe that capital punishment is contrary to the letter and spirit of the gospel?

If Congress may pass laws requiring labours on the Sabbath in *one department*, why may they not in *another*, and thereby effectually exclude from office all who conscientiously observe it as a day of rest?

Would there be no coercion in this?

Verily "*consistency thou art a jewel.*"